

ITALY IN THE AGE OF PINOCCHIO

Children and Danger in the Liberal Era

CARL IPSEN



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*To Michael and Benji
who happily aren't part of these stories*

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Contents

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	viii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
Introduction: Pinocchio, Child in Danger/Dangerous Child	1
1. Abandoned Children	15
2. Emigrating Children	51
3. Working Children	85
4. Children behind Bars: Reformatories and Juvenile Delinquency	123
5. <i>Salviamo il fanciullo!</i>	165
Epilogue: From <i>Pinocchio</i> to <i>Cuore</i> , Children inside the Margins	197
<i>Notes</i>	207
<i>Works Cited</i>	235
<i>Index</i>	253

List of Figures and Tables

Figure

1.1	'Non-recognized' illegitimates and abandoned infants, 1884–1914	23
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Tables

3.1	Italian Child Labor Laws	86
3.2	1900 Child Labor Law proposals	114
5.1	Childsaving Institutions and dates	176
5.2	Protective societies for girls	185

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Introduction

Pinocchio, Child in Danger/Dangerous Child

Near the beginning of Carlo Collodi's 1883 classic, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*,¹ Geppetto comes to Maestro Ciliegia with an idea:

I thought of making myself a fine wooden puppet; but a wonderful puppet who can dance, and fence, and make daredevil leaps. I intend to travel around the world with this puppet so as to earn my crust of bread and a glass of wine. What do you think about it?

(Collodi/Perella 1986, 89)

Maestro Ciliegia of course has just the right piece of talking wood to make such a puppet and the rest, so to speak, is history. Given Pinocchio's proclivity to get into trouble, however, Geppetto never realizes his original plan, even after he and Pinocchio are ultimately and happily reunited as they escape from the belly of the shark and the finally industrious Pinocchio turns into a real boy.

Instead, no sooner has Geppetto given legs to his wonderful puppet than it darts out the door and runs off down the street. With the help of a *carabiniere*—*carabinieri* constituted the rural police force in Italy—Geppetto, the father, succeeds in recapturing Pinocchio. Alas, while leading the recalcitrant puppet back home it is Geppetto, forced to drag the puppet by the neck because he forgot to give him ears for the purpose, about whom the townspeople begin to murmur and whom the *carabiniere* finally arrests for mistreatment, child abuse we would say today.

Already in the first few chapters, Collodi hits upon several specific themes we explore in this book. For example, the very first piece of Liberal-era children's legislation was an 1873 law forbidding the employment of children as wandering entertainers, just what Geppetto, a decade later, hoped to do with his dancing and somersaulting puppet/boy. Had he

succeeded he would have violated that law, though as we shall see below convictions were rare indeed. And as concern grew about children's welfare in the 1880s and 1890s the issue of mistreatment at the hands of parents became a major concern, though "heartless mothers" were targeted more often than fathers.

Pinocchio's transgressions do not of course end with that first attempt to run away. To the talking cricket, for example, he declares the life of a vagabond the one for which he is best suited, though the 1859 Piedmontese/Italian criminal code allowed for the institutionalization of child vagabonds; and that provision was further elaborated in the Italian Public Security Law of 1889. Moreover, when Pinocchio arrives on the Island of the Busy Bees, he refuses all proposals of industrious activity and shows himself to be a perfect idler (*ozioso*), yet another category covered by the legislation just mentioned. In addition to these relatively passive offences, Pinocchio also commits the two most widespread of child crimes and so those that were the greatest source of public anxiety, namely begging and thieving; though it should be mentioned that Pinocchio's attempt to steal some grapes to satisfy his gnawing hunger is thwarted when he steps into a nasty iron trap. For letting himself be cheated out of four gold coins, he instead spends that same number of months in prison, though probably not one of Italy's few reformatories for child offenders. Pinocchio also sells things that are not his to sell (his elementary school primer), gambles (encouraged by the evil Cat and Fox), and of course he lies.

Pinocchio's trip to the Land of the *Balocchi* (Funland) also fits into our story. The unnamed man who transports Pinocchio and his friend Lucignolo to the mythical land without schools, books, or teachers, for example, resembles those infamous agents we shall meet who signed up children in southern Italy and then transported them abroad, either for work in the sort of wandering trades referred to by Geppetto or else in foreign factories, in particular the glass factories of southern France. The care-free land of the *Balocchi* itself, alas, finds no parallel in the experiences of children in Liberal-era Italy; but the fate of both Pinocchio and Lucignolo, after they, like all children who refuse to study, grow into donkeys, is instead all too familiar. Lucignolo is worked to death while Pinocchio, trained to do tricks in a circus, is discarded after an injury renders him useless. We can interpret his next buyer's attempt to drown Pinocchio and use the donkey hide for a drum head as analogous to the sad fate of so many of the "little Italians" who migrated abroad and never returned.

By contrast, Pinocchio's tale has a happy ending, and Pinocchio becomes responsible and hardworking. Along the way, depending on how we want to interpret his successful "vacation exams," he may even have completed elementary school as required by the law of 1877. There was

hope then, even for idle and vagabond youth, providing they listened to the advise of the wise talking crickets, snails, parrots, and fireflies they encountered (but not cats and foxes!). Finally we need to return to the timing of Collodi's story. Concern about delinquent youth—idlers, vagabonds, beggars, street children, and criminals—crescendoe throughout the 1880s and 1890s and into the first decade of the twentieth century, namely from about the time Collodi published his great work, an index of public anxiety if ever there was one. And a similar chronology applies to the other problems we address, including child emigration, child abandonment, and child labor. So that I think we can fairly refer to the period between the first installment of Collodi's tale in 1881 and the years leading up to the World War I as the age of Pinocchio.

As should already be apparent, for all its timeliness Collodi's great work was very much tied to the place and time, Italy 1881–1883, in which it was written. Its continued appeal owes much to its many subtleties on topics like obedience, freedom, independence, filial and paternal love, behavior good and bad, and education (in its various senses); but it is also a work written barely a decade after the completion of Italian unification. As has been perhaps too often remarked, Italy was in those decades in the process of making itself, and many among the Liberal elite looked to public schooling as a fundamental tool in that fabrication. Not by accident, *Pinocchio* illustrates in dramatic terms the dangers of not going to school.

For our purposes, Pinocchio is also the archetype of a child image that raised new and special concern at the time. That image is of the child who is at once endangered by the modernizing world in which he lives and himself a danger produced by that world. Like Pinocchio, the street kid was prey to assassins and unscrupulous *padroni* and at the same time a potential beggar, thief, and general subverter of social order. Again like Pinocchio, that image tended to be male, though, as we shall see, girl factory workers, girls in moral danger, and girl prostitutes were also central to the contemporary Italian image of a dangerous child/child in danger.

In addition to functioning as a barometer of social concern about children in the period, *Pinocchio* also betrays a central tenet about the possibilities for saving and reforming the dangerous child/child in danger. The late nineteenth century was hardly the heyday of environmentalism and belief in the plasticity of human character. Francis Galton, for example, had laid the basis for the science of eugenics with his influential *Hereditary Genius* in 1869, a work that made strong claims about the hereditary nature of intelligence and behavior. The leading advocate of hereditarian views in Italy was instead Cesare Lombroso who published his first important work, *Criminal Man*, in 1876. In that study of the born criminal and in subsequent works Lombroso posited a material, biological basis for

criminality, genius, and a host of other human traits and behaviors. In the wake of works like these, the rest of the century witnessed a rising tide of hereditarianism that culminated appropriately in the rediscovery of Mendel's work on genetics in 1900.²

And yet Collodi in just that period presents us with the ultimate *tabula rasa*, an ordinary piece of wood, apparently lacking any sort of human inheritance at all, into which he breathes life. And what child is more the product of his environment and experiences than Pinocchio? His shape is carved by his carpenter father, the father whom he loves and disobeys. In the course of his adventures, Pinocchio comes under the sway of a host of creatures and influences. All contribute to making the puppet into a real boy. Given the pedagogic purpose of the piece—originally written for a children's magazine—it is little surprise that Pinocchio turns out for the best, but along the way there are plenty of moments when one can imagine that his independent and disrespectful tendencies might ultimately be his undoing. He is in fact hanged, turned into an ass, nearly drowned, and eaten by a shark.

Pinocchio then testifies, in a period otherwise characterized by hereditarian views (at least in scientific circles), to a belief in the possibility of turning even recalcitrant idlers into *ragazzini per bene* (proper boys). Not only did endangered children need to be protected from corrupting influences, but even those dangerous ones who had turned the corner of delinquency might be reformed given the proper treatment.

* * *

This book focuses then on what I have called the age of Pinocchio, namely from about the late 1870s to World War I, and claims that it was during those decades that Italy awoke to the suffering of children, the moment when it became a general conviction on the part of political and public opinion alike that Italian society needed to care for its unfortunate, marginalized, mistreated, and poor children, children previously dependent, at best, on the charity of ecclesiastical institutions. The evidence for that claim constitutes much of the material covered in the chapters that follow. In 1897, for example, an unfortunately typical level of mortality at the Neapolitan foundling home led to a parliamentary investigation and eventually a bill, in 1907, to reform and standardize care for abandoned children throughout Italy. Also in 1897, news of underage Italian children working in French glass factories prompted a well-publicized exposé by an Italian diplomat, followed by a series of dramatic rescues in 1900–1901. Again in 1897—a seeming *annus mirabilis* for awareness about children's issues—the Italian director general of prisons raised a cry of alarm about

skyrocketing levels of juvenile delinquency, a concern that would persist throughout the next ten or fifteen years and culminate in creation of a Committee on Juvenile Delinquency in 1909 and a proposed Minors Code in 1912. Worry about girls being sold into prostitution instead inspired founding of an Italian White Slave Trade Committee in 1901, and representatives of that committee of course attended the 1902 conference on white slavery in Paris. Furthermore, the 1901 Emigration Law included three articles on child emigration (for dangerous work, wandering trades, and prostitution), and 1902 arguably saw the first serious attempt in Italy to regulate child labor (revising the modest law of 1886). Finally, during the 1890s and after, a proliferation of lay and religious organizations were founded to save morally abandoned street children—idlers, vagabonds, beggars, petty thieves—from a life of vice and at the same time rid Italian cities of that troubling and dangerous presence.

One of the questions this work seeks to answer, then, is why did all of these child-related concerns come together in Italy in the period from about 1895 to 1910? What were the forces—political, economic, social, cultural—that focused the attention of both politicians and the bourgeois public on the problems of marginalized lower-class children? Certainly the immediate motivation was at least two-fold: on the one hand to save these unfortunate children from the various dangers to which they were easy prey and on the other to protect society from the threat they posed, in the present and in the future, to the public, political, and economic order of Italy. This is again the dichotomy I refer to as the dangerous child/child in danger. Yet to identify these motivations really begs the question of chronology. Were these various phenomena—abandonment, juvenile crime, emigration, child vagabondage, child labor—increasing? Or in any case was a perception of increase sufficient to jostle the traditional complacency they inspired? Or were there also other factors beyond the specific children's issues that played a role? In attempting to answer these questions, the chapters that follow will explore the various categories of marginalized children referred to earlier, while this introduction will attempt to briefly establish the relevant historical context—international, domestic, political, social and so on—for the early twentieth century concern in Italy about groups of children perceived as both endangered and dangerous.

The Italian awakening to children's issues predictably reflected international trends. Hugh Cunningham, for example, who has studied these questions long and well, identifies the period 1830–1920 as one characterized generally in the West by a new and important thrust in child philanthropy and child saving; in particular he notes a new role for professionals, experts, and the state after about 1880: “‘Saving the children’ involved moving them somewhere close to the centre of the political agenda of the

modern state" (Cunningham 1995, 134–7). And in her work on the moral abandonment of children in Third-Republic France Sylvia Schafer notes that "[t]he last three decades of the nineteenth century witnessed an international surge in public and private action against danger within the family, against a perceived plague of domestic neglect, and against the apparent increase in the number of children roaming the city streets on their own." And specifically with regard to France: "By the advent of the Third Republic, the theme—if not the reality—of child protection had come to be a legitimate element in the debates on the proper relationship between state and family" (Schafer 1997, 6). As we shall see below, France often served as a model for social policy in Italy and a measure against which to make comparisons. Nor was the situation across the Atlantic much different; for as Michael Grossberg observes, "Beginning in the 1870s more and more Americans began to dwell on the escalating dangers facing the republic's children and conversely the threat that delinquent, neglected, abandoned, and abused children posed to the society" (Grossberg 2003, 213).³ I have already suggested that these concerns found literary expression in Italy, and that phenomenon too was an international one; indeed it is this very same period (1863–1913) that Peter Hunt has identified as the "first golden age" of children's literature, not only of Pinocchio then, but also of *Alice in Wonderland*, the adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, Dorothy in the land of Oz, Peter Rabbit and others (Hunt 2001, xviii–xix).

While fitting into this international context, the history of Italian efforts to save the children has its own peculiarities and offers special insights. Those efforts interacted tellingly with Italian political and economic developments and faltered eventually in the shadow of massive Italian emigration. They frequently brought to the fore Italy's unique struggle between church and state. Moreover, children's issues in Italy were almost invariably cast in terms of the Italian perception of its own modernization, and to the disappointment of reformers not much was accomplished in spite of all the public, professional, and parliamentary discussion. In some ways, then, this is a history of failed initiatives, of great plans that rarely made it off the drafting table. One of our tasks will be to explore possible explanations for both the blossoming of initiatives on behalf of marginalized children in our period and the subsequent failure of those initiatives to bear fruit.

To begin with, the period in question, coinciding more or less with the years during which the Italian political world was dominated by the figure of Giovanni Giolitti, was something of a golden age in the history of the relationship between capital and labor in Italy. As end points for that relatively peaceful era we might take the Milanese insurrection of 1898, culmination of bread riots that spread up the peninsula in response to the grist

tax, and the “red week” of labor disturbances in 1914. It was also a period during which Italy looked primarily to domestic issues, abandoning, if only temporarily, foreign adventure. Again we might choose specific moments to bracket that period: the Italian defeat at Adua in 1896 and the invasion of Libya in 1911 (followed of course by entry into the Great War in 1915). It was also precisely the period when Italy embarked on so-called modern economic growth: following decades of stagnation, per capita income increased between 1896 and 1913 at an average annual rate of about 2 percent, while the relatively small industrial sector, confined primarily to the northwest, grew at several times that rate.⁴

The crescendo of concern then almost certainly owes something to relative social and political tranquility and to economic expansion. Italians became better able to afford what I shall call the luxury of caring. That characterization requires some explanation. I am not, for example, claiming that when Italians achieved a certain level of wealth they began to care for their children. Instead I suggest that it is only when a society or class achieves a degree of well-being that it is able to treat children in what has been generally perceived by Western bourgeois opinion, since at least some point in the early twentieth century, as a caring fashion. Alternatively, the seemingly callous treatment of many poor children in the past was not necessarily a sign of parental indifference. Various studies, for example, have convincingly challenged the suggestion that parents traditionally used the abandonment of children to foundling homes as a form of legal infanticide. Instead, given the information available to those parents and the dire material situations in which so many of them found themselves, they likely made a choice calculated to best serve the interests of both the infant and the family. One can make similar arguments with regard to the choice to send children to work in factories and mines.⁵ The parents of foundlings and child laborers then may have cared deeply for their children, yet both treatments today are routinely condemned and perceived as forms of child abuse. The historical situation explored here finds of course parallels in poor countries today. Conversely, material well-being also serves to alter manifestations of parental indifference, indifference that was no less lacking in the past than parental caring. Sending one’s children to a reformatory for several years “paternal correction,” for example, certainly owed much to the poverty of the period, while today in the midst of plenty we find new and perhaps more subtle ways to neglect and mistreat our children.

The growing attention to children in Italy also owed a great deal to the nation’s image of itself. As should become clear in the chapters that follow, Italians at the time, especially Italian politicians, were constantly comparing Italy to other more or less “civilized” nations. And so Italian children’s issues were repeatedly cast in terms of backwardness and modernization.

Anonymous abandonment of infants, for example, children laboring at tender ages in factories and mines, high levels of juvenile crime and begging, and the emigration of Italian children abroad for similar purposes were all viewed as characteristic of a backward society and not in keeping with the Italian lay Liberal elite's image of a modern post-unification Italy. Indeed Liberal perceptions of Italian backwardness and the need to modernize emerge in many places throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (and indeed beyond): from the *Risorgimento* hopes for a political, economic, and social renewal to accompany unification to the post-unification social investigations of the *meridionalisti* to the need to disembowel a backward city like Naples to Nationalist regrets about the inferior status of *Italietta*. We might even speak of a powerful myth of modernization that guided an important sector of Italian public opinion throughout the period.⁶

Nonetheless, the combination of social peace, economic growth, and reformist modernizing zeal did not suffice to implement many of the programs proposed. In part those forces ran up against simple fiscal limits. We encounter a particularly clear example of that in Giolitti's extravagant plan for state assistance to "materially and morally abandoned youth." Other forces specific to Italy were also at work. In particular, more pressing political and social issues came to crowd out the children's problems explored here. The political issues included rising international tension in the form of colonial conquest and European war, while domestic turmoil resurfaced as worker agitation and strikes after 1910 signaled the failure of the Giolittian social contract. The primary social issue of the age, however, was emigration, an unprecedented exodus of humanity that peaked at nearly a million people in 1913 (out of a total population of about 36 million). To put it crudely, the social worth of the children discussed in these pages declined during the decade or so leading up to World War I in the face of the considerable social disruption and suffering associated with the annual migration of hundreds of thousands of men, women, *and* children in search of a better life.

That emigration contributed fundamentally to the formation of a particular "demographic mentality"—a phrase that seeks to capture the general mood of a society regarding population size, fertility, mortality and migration—in pre-World War I Italy is also important to our story. Demographic mentalities might run the gamut from population obsession at one end to a psychology of surplus population at the other. Population obsession tends to accompany stagnant, slow, or declining demographic growth while a psychology of surplus population may come to the fore in periods of rapid demographic growth. In both cases, though, more important than the actual demographic indices is the general perception among

public opinion of population dearth or abundance. It is equally likely, probably more so, that a society demonstrate a general indifference about its demographic situation. Liberal Italy, however, was characterized by a widespread psychology of surplus population, a general perception that the state could not cope with (employ, feed, educate, etc.) its growing population. For while birth rates were declining in France and other major nations of Western Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, they remained high in Italy and population growth continued apace, fueling Italian emigration in spite of the relative economic growth the country enjoyed by about 1900. It must have seemed that Italy was overflowing with humanity. By comparison, France was at the other end of the spectrum of demographic mentalities, as fears of depopulation in this same period created there a growing climate of population obsession. One can well imagine that the fate of foundlings, street urchins, and other unfortunate children might get a more sympathetic hearing in a context where they are perceived as much-needed future workers, soldiers, and mothers, than in one where they instead represent so much human dross to be eventually siphoned off in emigration. One contemporary even commented as much:

And if Italy, a bountiful exporter of humanity, chooses not to worry about the excessive mortality of its infants, it must nonetheless be concerned about the progressive physical degeneration of its youth . . .⁷

The implication is that the fact of exporting humanity breeds indifference in Italy regarding infant mortality. Moreover, this anonymous observer (in 1911) raises the added specter of racial degeneration. As we shall see, that concern gradually gained importance in the Italian discourse about marginalized children during the final decade of the nineteenth century and after, though generally in that context described above of reform and the search for environmental solutions (as opposed to eugenic ones).

Ultimately in pre-World War I Italy, the myth of modernization that pushed legislators and public opinion to advocate for working-class children ran up against the still dominant psychology of surplus population, producing the generally limited results explored in the chapters that follow. And while only one element in the larger political evolution in the period, this history of marginalized children serves as an allegory for the general failure of the Italian Liberal state. In a pattern that might well be generalized, elements came together in the years 1897–1910 for reform in the various areas considered here, and so for a decisive move toward the modern social state in a Liberal and democratizing context. However, other forces—not least of which emigration and war—got in the way and so aborted the process.

Turning our gaze again outside of Italy, can we use our example to better understand the international surge in attention to children's issues that various historians have identified in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? As we have already described, children's issues came to the fore in contexts characterized by markedly different demographic mentalities. As a general model, though, I would suggest that child anxiety found its most fertile soil in contexts of population obsession, like that emerging in mid-nineteenth-century France, and also in industrially advanced contexts, like the United States and Britain where the distressing urban specters of street children, child laborers, and child criminals loomed large. That anxiety, however, came soon to constitute a more general trapping of modernity or civilization and so by the 1870s spread to other societies, largely Western though perhaps beyond the West as well, that perceived of themselves as part of that modern and civilizing world. So while a comparison of Italian economic or demographic indices, or indeed of demographic mentality, reveals a very different picture from that of France, Germany, Britain or the United States, nonetheless we do see Italy embarking on similar save the children campaigns insofar as Italian society embraced the larger Western modernizing discourse of the period.

The growing conviction that modern societies bore an obligation to care for their least fortunate children also coincided with a new role for children in the family. This change has probably been most eloquently described by Viviana Zelizer who in a study of children in the United States traces how the useful (possibly wage-earning) child of the nineteenth century (and before) gave way to the economically useless but emotionally priceless child in the period between 1870 (by now a familiar starting date) and 1930. Certainly a similar "cultural transformation in children's value" was underway in Italy and elsewhere as well. It contributed to the growing conviction that children should be both out of the market (especially the factory) and off the street (Zelizer 1985). The cause lying behind the social construction of the priceless child in the late nineteenth century, however, remains elusive. Nor perhaps should we expect to find that cause insofar as this construct forms just one part of a larger transformation of the family, including the roles of mothers and fathers as well as children, that accompanied, and likely derived from, the larger process of modernization at work throughout the period studied here. And while levels and rates of change of industrialization, economic development, literacy, urbanization, and other standard measures of modernization may have varied considerably from place to place, it is interesting and revealing to note, again, how the accompanying social values, including society's obligation to save the children and the emergence of the priceless child, might spread more rapidly and with greater chronological coincidence, catching on as it were

at similar moments in different places experiencing different material contexts but all more or less on the same trajectory.

The present work tries not to advance yet another claim for the “discovery of childhood,” though it may fail in that effort. Much has been written about the emergence of a concept of childhood at some point in the past. And while that concept has of course varied over the centuries, I think by now the debate over some initial discovery of children as creatures to be loved and cared for has been pretty well laid to rest.⁸ Most children in the past had hard lives by contemporary Western standards, largely because of material want. Rather than attempting to identify variations in parental affection for children, culminating perhaps in the coddled Italian only-child of today, however, I would repeat that in Italy as elsewhere in the industrializing world of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the working classes were progressively more able to indulge in the luxury of caring for their children (in a more middle-class fashion) as their financial situations became more secure. As it became easier for families to meet subsistence needs without the contribution of wages earned by 8 and 9 year olds, those children started to go to school rather than the factory.

Documented in this book is instead another kind of discovery. It is not the discovery of working-class children by working-class parents but the discovery of working-class children by middle-class reformers. In each of the cases explored here, bourgeois and political opinion awoke to the plight of marginalized youth and sought to alleviate some of its suffering. It is that discovery in its various facets that I principally explore. Along the way I illustrate that discovery with various insights into the real experiences of those children, largely by means of anecdotes, official inquiry, statistics, and a gleaning of published sources. Using another of Cunningham’s observations I study one aspect of the *history of childhood*, the evolving bourgeois conception of the appropriate activities and treatment of working-class youth, and try wherever possible to delve also into the *history of children*, and so understand something about the lives of that youth.

One of the central observations of this work is the coincidence of a variety of child concerns in a specific period of a decade and a half or so. Nonetheless, the chapters do wander outside those chronological boundaries and follow an order that finds justification in their chronological succession. The first chapter explores what may have been Italy’s oldest children’s “problem,” namely the plight of foundlings, those children, “legitimate” and not, given up by their parents at birth because of poverty, indifference, or concern about the social stigma of unwed motherhood. An institutional apparatus to deal with foundlings had existed in Italy since the Middle Ages, while modern reform of foundling practices, following for the most part French examples, began instead in the 1860s and garnered national

attention thanks to the Neapolitan scandal of 1897 with which chapter 1 opens. Foundling practices were attacked as symptomatic of an unfortunate past that needed to be overcome, as out of step with the modern world. The chapters that follow instead focus on problems that were often themselves viewed as symptoms of modernity. Child emigration is the topic of chapter 2. Not long after unification, emigration emerged as the major social issue of the Liberal period and peaked in the years prior to World War I. A significant percentage (10–20 percent) of the millions of Italian emigrants were children, and children not always accompanied by their parents.⁹ Indeed the first piece of Liberal-era legislation dealing with children, from 1873 (four years before obligatory schooling), addressed the problem of children emigrating for the purpose of engaging in the so-called wandering trades (Gepetto's original plan for Pinocchio). Not surprisingly the plight of children would continue to figure in the emigration debate that followed and was specifically addressed in the 1901 Emigration Law. Chapter 3 deals with what would seem to be an inevitable accompaniment of industrialization, namely child labor; Italy passed child labor laws in 1886, 1902, and 1907. Chapter 4 instead addresses an issue at least as old as child abandonment, namely juvenile delinquency. Yet while foundling abandonment, however distressing, was on the decline in our period, child crime was on the rise, inspiring an attitude that moved from relative reassurance in 1879 to near panic in the decade or so following 1897. Finally, the last chapter looks at a problem which is in some ways new and unique to the period, namely street children and the "moral abandonment" of one's offspring. Coming full circle in some sense, the problem of moral abandonment was linked up to that of material (or foundling) abandonment in a (failed) 1907 bill proposed by Giolitti.

This is, again, a book about children in Italy, a country often thought today to be fixated on children (puericentric we might say). Certainly Italians are more demonstrative in their liking of children than many other national groups, and they tend to indulge them. And while other seemingly child-centered cultures are characterized primarily by parents lavishing attention on their own offspring, in Italy all children are fair game. Attractive babies and toddlers there inevitably garner admiring comments from complete strangers. Equally, violation of any of the Italian rules of childrearing (exposure to drafts or allowing excessive sweating for example) is almost certain to earn a reprimand for the errant parent or caregiver. And Italian children can be monumentally poorly behaved in public places. Nonetheless, Italy has today one of the lowest birth rates in the world, a fact seemingly at odds with Italian devotion to children. In truth, though, it is not, for how better to indulge a child than for parents to focus all their attention, aspirations, and conspicuous consumption on a single child, possibly well into that child's adulthood?

But where did this puericentrism come from? Was it perhaps new in just our period? As this introduction has already suggested, a look at the nineteenth century reveals some spectacular examples of the brutal lives of children: children rented out by their parents as traveling minstrels; children sent down into mines to haul heavy loads of sulfur; infants abandoned anonymously by their parents to foundling homes; young girls sold into prostitution; children committed by their parents to reformatories for “paternal correction.” At the very end of that century one observer could indeed remark (with regard to the abuse of paternal correction):

I can only hope that . . . the undeserved, or at best exaggerated, characterization of our nation as one of those in which family ties are weakest . . . will be dispelled, or in any case revised. (Canevelli 1899, 347)

Clearly Italy was not always a child-friendly place.

The scenarios suggested above, and explored in some detail below, are happily unfamiliar to Italians today, except perhaps insofar as they apply to recently arrived immigrant groups: Albanian boys begging on the streets of Milan, young Nigerian prostitutes along Italy’s rural highways. In both the historical and the present-day situations, though, the cause is sadly and basically the same, whether these cruelties are carried out by parents or by other traffickers in children, namely poverty. In Liberal Italy, it was that same misery that would send millions of Italians to seek work abroad in the decades between unification and World War I.

The emergence of Italian puericentrism then, the path from the perception of Italy as a country characterized by weak family ties to an Italy that celebrates and indulges children, makes its way through the chapters that follow. The indulgence of children became an accompaniment of prosperity. Ultimately, to neglect one’s children—whether by abandoning them to a foundling home, sending them to work, beg or perform at a young age, or simply letting them wander the streets—was a sign of poverty and so of backwardness and the past. It was something that generalized prosperity eventually made no longer necessary and was thus to be avoided as an unfortunate memory. I do not really believe that Italians love their children any more or less than other national groups, but I do want to suggest that the occasionally excessive and demonstrative aspects of that affection have something to do with the transition from a very different past, a past when most Italians were poor and could not afford the luxury of child indulgence.

This book is about that past and those many poor children.

Abandoned Children

The Annunziata Scandal

On May 22, 1897, *La Libertà*, a progressive Catholic evening newspaper in Naples, announced that it had just received a shocking report on the Neapolitan foundling home, the Casa dell'Annunziata.¹

Just as we were going to press, we received a copy of the Medical and Administrative Investigation of the Annunziata Foundling Home . . . We haven't time today for a full report, but the investigation includes incredible revelations. Consider that of the 856 infants entrusted to the Annunziata in 1895, the number still alive when the investigating committee visited the home in the early months of 1896 was only THREE!²

Other Neapolitan papers picked up the story the next day, as the scandal made dramatic headlines. *Il Paese*, a radical, muckraking daily, devoted its lead article to "The Scandal of the Annunziata" and followed up with "The Massacre of the Innocents," an evocation of biblical cruelty that came to be the phrase most associated with the scandal. The tone of other papers was generally less strident, but all seized upon the story, and during the following weeks the Neapolitan press was dominated by "The Question of the Annunziata," "The Annunziata Investigation," "The Children of the Madonna," "The Slaughter of the Annunziata," and the oft-repeated "Massacre of the Innocents." Attention focused on the shocking mortality figure and revelations of the terrible conditions to which the foundlings were subjected. The story quickly spread beyond Naples and made headlines throughout Italy.³

Before following up on the scandal, we should note some of the larger social, political, and demographic issues that it illuminates; issues to which we return in the course of this chapter. To begin with, the story itself is a fascinating if distressing episode in the history of Italian foundling care in

a context of demographic “transition” and modernization. The year 1897 is in fact as good as any from which to date the onset of both Italian fertility decline and Italian industrialization and attendant economic growth.⁴ The scandal came in fact at just that moment in Italian history, discussed in the introduction, when an ever more insistent “myth of modernization” came to challenge the general psychology of surplus population that characterized the nation. Against a background of that essential tension in public opinion, the Annunziata scandal initiated the central decade of child anxiety in Liberal Italy, a decade that continued until presentation of the ill-fated 1907 bill on “morally and materially abandoned children.” We shall only complete the story of that legislation in our final chapter on child saving; along the way we shall see how public concern about the plights of marginalized Italian youth—child emigration, child labor, juvenile delinquency, street life, and so on—came to the fore in the decade initiated by the Annunziata scandal.

At a national level, the scandal and subsequent Foundling Home Investigation represent then a telling example of the Liberal state’s attempt to cope with a segment of population that was unwanted. At a time of exuberant population growth, foundlings represented a surplus, a category that also included orphans, the unemployed, criminals, the sick, and so on, and which the state sought, not always effectively, to deal with by means of a series of institutions and laws. At a local level, instead, the Annunziata held a special place in the social and folk history of Naples. Before unification, it had served as a symbol of royal charity for the Bourbon monarchy, and afterward, because of its mission to assist Naples’ most unfortunate and vulnerable population, it continued to function both as an object of charity and a salve to the conscience of the Neapolitan well-to-do. The apparent failure to fulfill that central mission reveals both an unfortunate aspect of the centralized state functioning at a municipal level and the difficulties of reform. In particular, the Annunziata scandal highlights the difficult relationship between lay and Catholic social welfare.⁵

The chain of events that led up to the May 1897 scandal began in October of the previous year when the home’s three-member governing board sought to reorganize the home’s bloated and not terribly effective medical staff. Mortality at the institute had been increasing over the preceding few years and the administrators put this down to poor medical care. Two of the physicians implicated protested to the Provincial Administrative Board (*Giunta provinciale amministrativa* or GPA)⁶ that the cause of high mortality was instead a shortage of wet nurses to suckle the abandoned infants. The GPA, then under the leadership of Prefect Gianetto Cavasola,⁷ appointed a committee to investigate the situation and it was this committee’s report that inspired headlines the following May.

The harshest reaction may have come from the radical *Il Paese* which had been covering the investigation and "the scandal about which all Naples is talking" even before the shocking mortality figures were released.⁸ Initially that paper doubted that the prefect would follow through on the investigation as similar investigations in the past had come to naught.⁹ Following release of the report, *Il Paese* singled out the Annunziata administration, whom it held responsible for the slaughter "which many good Neapolitans can hardly believe," and demanded that criminal charges be brought against them. It also suggested that the Annunziata only represented the tip of an iceberg of corruption and misadministration in Naples' several dozen other charitable institutions.¹⁰

In addition to a level of mortality "far above that of any other foundling home," the GPA report sought to identify the causes of this tragic state of affairs.¹¹ Medical care was indeed insufficient. The physicians generally visited the home only in the mornings so some of the newly-arrived foundlings had to wait nearly 24 hours for an examination. In the meanwhile they mixed with the other infants at the home and might be assigned to one of the wet nurses kept there. If they were sick, and especially if syphilitic, they might well pass on their disease to the nurse and thereby to other infants. Yet while the physicians were criticized for negligence, including excessive absenteeism and the establishment of teaching clinics at the home which distracted them from their primary responsibility of care for the foundlings, the major blame was reserved for the administration. The GPA rejected the contention that high mortality was the result of poorly organized medical care (a situation which the administration should in any case have corrected) and pointed instead to factors of nutrition and hygiene. Wet nurses at the home typically were expected to nurse two, three, and even four foundlings with the result that none were properly fed. Indeed the diet of the wet nurses themselves seems to have been insufficient. Moreover, attempts to augment nursing with animals' milk were catastrophic as neither the milk nor the containers in which it was kept were sterilized. Further criticism cited the unsanitary and damp building, dirty linens, and a lack of fresh air.

It was well-known that mortality was considerably lower for those infants raised outside the institute as compared to within. And yet the committee discovered that not only had the administration made no effort to increase the number of infants farmed out to wet nurses and families in the countryside, they had actually shortened the period during which external wet nurses were paid for their services from 18 to 15 months, a period already well below the national average. Nor, they found, had the administration bothered since 1878, almost 20 years before, even to keep track of those foundlings who were farmed out and for whom they were

legally responsible. Finally, the administration was accused of having doctored the statistics, first claiming excessive mortality in order to criticize the physicians and further their plans for reorganization, and then reversing their position and providing a much lower figure in order to defend themselves from criticism. The report concluded that the administrators were incompetent and too busy with their own activities which often took them away from the city. It called on the national government to dissolve the current administration.

The GPA report was reprinted in the *Corriere di Napoli*, another Neapolitan paper, which seconded its conclusions. That paper criticized the administration, called for criminal charges, and generally supported the physicians who, it was revealed, had been calling for years upon the administration for reform. As compared to *Il Paese*, the *Corriere di Napoli* was politically closer to the current national government of Prime Minister Rudinì and had words of praise for its local representative, Prefect Cavasola.

Other papers only responded after a few days to the shocking revelations of the GPA. The conservative *Il Mattino*,¹² for example, founded by the noted Neapolitan journalists Eduardo Scarfoglio and Matilde Serao, at first only briefly reported the mortality figures and the fact that the Annunziata administration had appealed to the State Council (Consiglio di Stato) against the findings of the committee.¹³ A couple of days later, however, Serao began an emotional four-part article entitled "The Children of the Madonna" with the observation that she neither knew nor cared who the administrators of the Annunziata were; nor did she care about any conflicts that might have existed between that administration and the Annunziata physicians. All that mattered, and to which no one could remain indifferent, were "those 900 tiny white cadavers," the report of which had shaken the traditional Neapolitan apathy with a tremor of horror.¹⁴ Two other papers, *Don Marzio* and *Roma*, first mentioned the "question" (as opposed to scandal) of the Annunziata on May 24 when they were able to print the response of the foundling home's superintendent Giuseppe Lazzaro. Both papers were clearly on the side of the administration. *Roma* in fact had been founded by Lazzaro himself.¹⁵

Catholic reaction was instead summed up in *La Libertà*. In that paper, the noted Neapolitan Catholic politician Francesco Parlati¹⁶ reviewed both the GPA report and subsequent responses of the administration, especially with regard to the mortality figures. Parlati concluded that "it is nonetheless the case that of the babies whom the foundling home attempts to care for, almost none escape death," largely as a result of the high foundling to wet nurse ratio and the poor nutrition of the latter. Not sparing the physicians, his harshest criticism was nonetheless directed at the administration that he held morally responsible for the tragedy. Then, striking a unique

note, he added: "the true culprit is another," namely the practice of awarding these administrative appointments, which should be "positions of sacrifice," to men like Lazzaro who are parliamentary deputies and spend most of their time in Rome (or perhaps Puglia where he held his parliamentary seat). What one needed were not professional politicians but good Christians, and Parlati called for the handing over of responsibility for the Annunziata to the Sisters of Charity (who already provided much of the staff). Prior to unification, the church had indeed played a larger role in charitable works, and that role had since been co-opted by the local representatives of the Liberal secular state, namely the provincial government.¹⁷ The traditional hostility of the church toward that Liberal state is explicit in Parlati's criticism and appeal.

Whatever larger currents of public opinion or mass psychology one might succeed in identifying in the story of the Annunziata, the scandal had of course specific causes, in particular a professional-political conflict. The Annunziata administration was politically appointed¹⁸ and consisted of three men: Giuseppe Lazzaro, Luigi Simeoni, and Ferdinando Rubinacci. Lazzaro, who held a seat in the Chamber of Deputies without interruption from 1861 to 1908 (when he was appointed senator), had been elected to the Annunziata administration in 1876 and had been its director since 1881. He was, together with Gennaro Di Sandomato and Giovanni Nicotera, one of the leaders of the machine that dominated Neapolitan politics between unification and the end of the century. From 1863 to 1890, he also directed an important Neapolitan daily, *Roma* (referred to above), which served as the principal mouthpiece of the Neapolitan "historic left." That left had, of course, come to power nationally under the leadership of Agostino Depretis in 1876, the same year Lazzaro joined the Annunziata. Simeoni also held a parliamentary seat (from 1880 and, like Lazzaro, through to the legislature of 1904–1909) and was a crony of Lazzaro's, having among other things collaborated on *Roma*. Rubinacci instead was the junior partner, a member of the Neapolitan provincial council and almost certainly of the same political stripe as his more important fellow administrators. Lazzaro and Simeoni were classic representatives of that form of southern clientelism perfected by the left after 1876, a political strategy that often strayed into the area of corruption and even collaboration with organized crime.¹⁹

The Neapolitan faction to which Lazzaro belonged probably reached the height of its power in 1876 with the victory of Depretis and the appointment of Nicotera as minister of interior (a position he would hold again briefly under di Rudinì in 1891–1892). By contrast, Depretis' successor, Crispi, was generally hostile to the Neapolitan left though his fall from power in 1896 did little to help that group as he was followed by the conservative di Rudinì (who this time kept the interior portfolio for

himself). Di Rudinì in fact appointed the Piedmontese Giannetto Cavasola as Neapolitan prefect, and Cavasola showed himself to be steadfast in the face of both corruption among the existing Neapolitan power elite and also the violent challenges posed by the extreme left opposition.

The journalistic debate reviewed above quickly spread to the relevant political institutions. At a meeting of the Neapolitan provincial council that same week, a fiery Radical advocate joined Prefect Cavasola, unusual bedfellows, in condemning the Annunziata administration to the cheers of a packed hall, while that administration's representative on the council, Rubinacci, left without offering a word in his own defense and before the final resolution calling for his dismissal.²⁰ In Rome, the Neapolitan Radical deputy Giovanni Bovio led the campaign for investigation and reform, while Simeoni and Lazzaro, unlike Rubinacci, countered the accusations made against them.²¹ Both in parliament and the press those two administrators blamed the provincial authorities for having ignored their repeated calls for reform in the past. The problem according to them was a medical one and responsibility for the health and survival of the foundlings lay with the physicians, though it is worth noting that the administrators also reserved a portion of blame for the internal wet nurses, whom they described as immoral (Lazzaro et al. 1897, 64).

In the wake of the scandal, public opinion ran strongly against the administration, and a week after it broke they resigned as a group, claiming that their dignity would not allow them to stay at their posts for another minute. Neither would the government for that matter, as their dismissal was imminent. The departure of Lazzaro and company cleared the way for di Rudinì to appoint Gustavo Pucci, director of the foundling home in Florence, as the Annunziata's special commissar. Pucci arrived in Naples on June 3 and stayed for 19 months, uncovering the truly horrible conditions at the Annunziata.²² The major problems he identified were malnutrition, overcrowding, and poor hygiene. At the time of his arrival he found on average 2.3 foundlings per wet nurse—though some nurses had as many as four charges—and the nurses themselves were poorly fed. It seems that their meager rations were made even more so as a result of a petty black market in Annunziata provisions carried on by the *alunnato* (see below); the items sold included even the milk intended for the foundlings. In addition to nursing and caring for the infants, the wet nurses were expected to carry wood for the furnaces, transport laundry to and from the laundry room and rooftop drying area, transport dead infants from the infirmaries to the morgue, and other tasks. Pucci described their lives as ones of ceaseless toil, unrelieved by even a walk outside; in addition to the danger that they might run away, it was thought unseemly for them to be seen in public as some were “fallen” women (Pucci 1900).

Contributing to the general level of filth Pucci encountered, the home lacked sufficient hot water, and so bed linens, clothing, and diapers were often washed in cold water or else simply rinsed and hung out to dry. Lacking adequate heating as well, these items, especially in winter, were not always properly dried and babies might be wrapped in still-damp and partially soiled diapers. The lack of burners and hot water also meant that milk for the infants was normally not heated and the bottles from which it was fed not sterilized. Animal's milk in this period was given to weaned infants, sick (especially syphilitic)²³ ones, and as a supplement to nurslings because of the shortage of wet nurses, generally with poor results. The worst conditions were in the crowded infirmaries where no attempt was made to isolate infants with infectious diseases, and sick babies might be found in the same cribs with well ones, and even live ones together with dead.

With regard to the home's large budget, Pucci identified the major financial drain as the *alunnato*; the *alunnato* consisted of several hundred girls and women who had either never left the Annunziata or else been returned to the home by their nurses subsequently to remain, in some cases for life. According to an earlier reform, foundlings were not to be allowed in the home past the age of 21, but as there was nowhere else for them to go, this reform had never been implemented. Pucci's evaluation of the *alunnato* finds a parallel in Laura Guidi's analysis of the general culture of female reclusion in Naples at the time, in particular the ability of these women "to manipulate rules and roles to suit their own needs, to use deference as a means of defense and for the achievement of desires and projects" (Guidi 1991, 20). Yet while Guidi identifies these sorts of strategies as aimed at self-preservation and the establishment of an autonomous female space in a world that offered few other alternatives, Pucci predictably condemns them.²⁴ Not only do the *alunne* lead an "easy and desirable life" in the home, spending their time at silk and gold embroidery and music lessons, but the petty traffic they conduct in reselling the home's food allows them to indulge in unwarranted luxuries: frilly clothes, stockings, and even fashionable shoes. For the sake of the home's budget as well as the morality of the women themselves, Pucci energetically sought to suppress these practices, expelling one *alunna* caught in the act of selling and generally imposing a more rigid lifestyle. His attempt met with considerable protest including threats of rebellion and arson. According at least to Pucci, the new commissar prevailed, substituting work in the laundry and kitchen as well as help with the diapering of the infants for piano and embroidery and eliminating the internal black market, all of which presumably improved the quality of life for the wet nurses and nurslings.

Pucci also took steps to improve hygiene and medical care. He transformed the large upstairs dormitories of the *alunnato* into infirmaries for

the sick nurslings with sufficient cribs (200) so that each child had its own; he also created separate partitions for infectious diseases. He allowed the wet nurses daily walks outside the home and generally improved their diet. With regard to the milk, proper procedures of bottle washing and sterilization were instituted. Other measures aimed to generally improve the hygiene, heating, hot water, and laundry situation of the home. Pucci's attempts to increase the wages paid to external wet nurses however came to naught. Their recruitment was further aggravated by the fact that those nurses coming from the desirable rural areas were not reimbursed for their traveling expenses and were expected to arrive equipped with infant clothing and diapers as the nurslings were consigned to them completely nude. Pucci requested permission to both pay travel costs and provide clothing.²⁵ Confirming the findings of the GPA, he also found that the home had entirely failed to keep track of foundlings farmed out to external wet nurses, especially after the eighteen-month period of payments. Many it turned out had been moved to other provinces or had died, unbeknownst to the previous administration.²⁶

Pucci certainly improved conditions at the Annunziata, and mortality decreased during his tenure. Subsequently, Prefect Cavasola appointed the Principe di Cellamare as the home's new director. Under Cellamare, external wet nurse wages were finally increased, doubled in fact, with the expected result of reduced crowding and still lower mortality (Ipsen 2000). Other achievements by Pucci and Cellamare included the return of abandoned legitimate children to their parents and the encouragement of filiation subsidies for unwed mothers. In fact, during Cellamare's first 20 months about half (108 out of 220) of the unmarried women who used the (reopened) Annunziata maternity ward were convinced to keep their children, at a considerable savings to the home.²⁷

The Annunziata scandal was not a unique event. Similar revelations had been made at other Italian foundling homes on other occasions. It was unique, however, insofar as it captured national attention and led to a national Foundling Home Investigation and calls for reform. Before turning our attention to that subsequent narrative, we should take a moment to look at the larger geographical and chronological contexts into which these events fit.

Foundling Care in Naples and Beyond

The foundling question in Italy is by no means unexplored, but most of the work done to date concentrates on the mid-nineteenth century and before, while saying relatively little about the period considered here.²⁸ As it turns

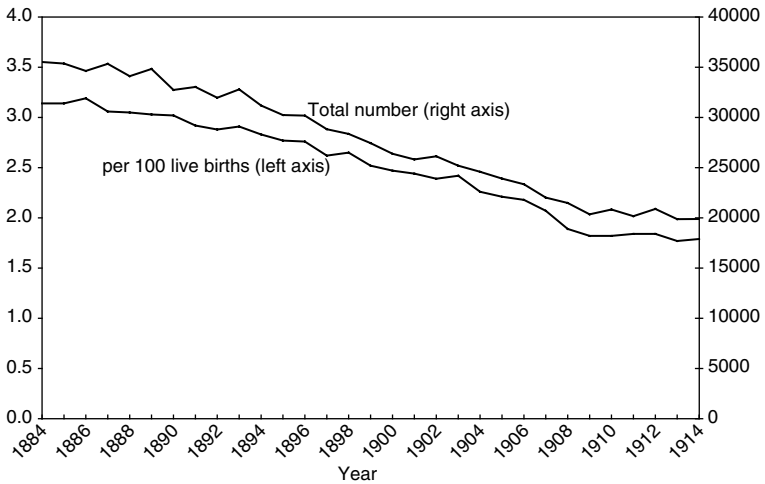


Figure 1.1 ‘Non-recognized’ illegitimates and abandoned infants, 1884–1914.

Source: Dirstat, Movimento dello stato civile.

out, the centuries-long practice of institutionalized abandonment in Italy probably peaked around 1860 before beginning the decline that would lead to its virtual disappearance in the twentieth century (see figure 1.1).²⁹ That decline merits more attention. In part it was administrative as more and more homes sought to prevent the abandonment of legitimate children and encourage unwed mothers to keep and care for their own babies. In part, though, it must have also represented a change in behavior. What, we might ask, were the economic, demographic, and social forces behind that change? And what were its ramifications? Did parents stop abandoning infants because of an improved standard of living? Because they loved and valued their offspring more? Or because they exercised ever greater control over their own reproduction and so could more effectively avoid unwanted births?³⁰

Over the past few decades there has been considerable debate over the question of parental/maternal affection in past times and so over the motivation behind abandonment. Langer (1973) and Shorter (1975, 168–204), for example, have argued that in prior times—till the late eighteenth century in France for Shorter—poor parents were relatively indifferent regarding the fate of their newborn children and infants; that indifference combined with the very high mortality suffered by foundlings might suggest that legal abandonment served as a convenient alternative to (illegal) infanticide for those parents. Others, including Fuchs (1984) and Hunecke (1989, 30–6), argue instead that in a state of abject poverty, those parents

sought what they thought was best for their children, namely round-the-clock care and wet nursing paid for by the foundling home.³¹ Alternatively, we can identify an indifferent society as the true Culprit—Jessie White Mario does just that in her *Pious Works and Legal Infanticide* (1897). According to this view, bourgeois opinion (or non-opinion as the case may be) condoned traditional foundling practices and the attendant (and not unknown) high levels of mortality. To return to a concept suggested earlier, admitting a prevalent psychology of surplus population, it was unlikely that those practices and mortality would occupy much space in public opinion. The Annunziata scandal instead represents an exceptional if temporary moment when the fate of foundlings did rise to the level of a national concern.

Abandonment in Italy began to decline more or less at the time of unification, perhaps a coincidence. Concurrently with the onset of that decline, the administration of foundling care entered into a period of gradual and geographically patchwork reform. As so often, the Italian situation was compared to foreign examples, notably that of France. A French study of 1860, for example, revealed that foundling practices were pretty uniform throughout the French Second Empire, and the final turning box there closed in 1868. Reform in Liberal Italy instead was left to local administrations for many more decades, and the 1900 Italian Foundling Home Investigation (reviewed in more detail below) exposed a persistent and startling diversity of approaches.³²

That diversity contrasted sharply with the centuries of relative uniformity that had characterized foundling care in the separate states of the peninsula before unification,³³ and it too deserves scrutiny, both with regard to its nature and geography. It was a diversity, oddly enough, born of unification, for unification had witnessed the replacement in many realms of traditional authorities, especially Catholic ones, with lay Liberal reformers. One of these realms was the administration of charitable works, where reformers sought to bring Italian practices more in line with those of the rest of Europe.³⁴ The degree to which they succeeded or failed (or made the attempt at all) reflected not only the differing ideas and abilities of the reformers themselves, but also the variety of local social contexts in which the reforms were attempted. As it turns out, through the lens of the national Foundling Home Investigation inspired by the Annunziata scandal, there emerges an interesting if not terribly surprising geography not only of approaches to foundling care, but also of contemporary attitudes regarding illegitimacy and unwed motherhood.

A few words on the system to be reformed are in order.³⁵ Foundling homes seem to have been an Italian invention of the premodern era. They were created to provide an alternative to, and so prevent, abortion, infanticide, and the

abandonment of infants in public places. The central feature of these homes was their *ruota* or turning cradle into which infants could be deposited anonymously. Anonymity was a central feature of the system. It allowed unwed mothers in particular to unburden themselves of the fruits of their sin in a way that best preserved both the honor of the woman and her family and the mother's chances for salvation. Anonymity also meant that, regardless of the intentions of the foundling-home administrators, married mothers (and fathers) could also use the system to be rid of offspring they either did not want or could not afford to keep. As we shall see below, the anonymity of mothers was challenged by the late nineteenth-century reformers who sought to encourage those mothers to recognize and keep their illegitimate children. The anonymity of illegitimate fathers instead was carefully protected; one of the most frequent arguments in its favor was that to reveal the illegitimate paternity of married men would threaten the integrity of legitimate families.³⁶ Although voices were raised from time to time to protest this obvious protection of male seducers, it was not seriously challenged in the Liberal period.

Once the foundlings had been received by the home, the usual practice was to farm them out to external wet nurses as soon as possible. It was not always possible, however, and the infants, especially if brought by courier on a long trip from the rural hinterland, might well arrive exhausted and malnourished. It was necessary then to keep internal wet nurses at the homes to suckle the infants until they could be placed; if they could be placed at all. Ideally wet nurses, internal and external, were to be drawn from the unfortunate and considerable population of women whose babies had perished at birth or shortly afterward.³⁷ In practice, the external nurses might also include women, usually unwed, who had abandoned their own children, women nursing their own children at the same time, or others still who had just weaned one (or indeed others who had no milk at all). Because of the generally low wages they received, these nurses were in any case difficult to find. One strategy employed to procure them was to establish a maternity hospital, attached to the home, where women wanting to hide a pregnancy could confine themselves and give birth in secret. The child was then sent to the home as a *figlio d'ignoti* (child of unknown parentage) and the mother required to either pay a fee (usually beyond the means of lower- or working-class women) or else serve for a period as an internal nurse, for as long as a year in the case of Bologna studied by Kertzer (1993, 128–31).

The so-called Italian system never caught on in northern Europe where, in contrast to Italy, parents, including fathers, were generally held responsible for their illegitimate offspring, and both maternity and paternity searches were legal.³⁸ By contrast, it did spread to the Catholic world where, however, it came under increasing criticism in the nineteenth

century. In particular, the institution of the turning cradle was condemned. Several reasons were cited in the Italian case that were undoubtedly characteristic of other contexts as well. To begin with, foundling services were generally intended only for children born out of wedlock, while the anonymity of the turning cradle made it impossible to prevent the abandonment of legitimate children (who would then legally be considered bastards). Shorter reports French estimates of legitimate abandonment as high as 80 percent, though concludes that the real level for nineteenth-century France was probably 10–25 percent (1975, 173–4), while Hunecke finds that for the period 1831–1854, between 50 and 60 percent of all infants left in the Milanese turning cradle were legitimate (1989, 138–42). In addition, many provinces, especially those including major cities, found that they were supporting foundlings brought from outside their borders where it may have been harder to insure anonymity. And finally, in the decades after unification the conviction grew stronger in Italy that mothers, though not fathers, should bear responsibility for their illegitimate children, and that the children themselves were better off with their biological mothers (a position again characteristic of lay reformers and generally opposed by Catholics).

The Neapolitan Casa dell' Annunziata was one of Italy's oldest foundling homes and fit more or less the model described earlier, though with its own peculiarities.³⁹ So, for example, the passage of the infant through the Annunziata turning cradle had both a symbolic and juridical significance. From being a child of unknown parentage (*figlio d'ignoti*) he or she became a child of *Ave gratia plenum* or a child of the Madonna (*figlio della Madonna*) and so blessed according to popular perception. As throughout Italy, the home legally acquired both the authority and responsibility of a parent (*patria potestà*) with regard to the foundlings, and so the Annunziata administration was meant to keep track of and protect the Annunziata foundlings after they left the home for external wet nurses. This parental or guardian role traditionally continued for boys until they were 25 and for girls until married. Often, in fact, children were returned to the home by external wet nurses after the completion of the period of paid care (a short 18 months) or by foster families because of inability or refusal to care for the child any longer. And while boys were only kept in the home until age 7, after which they went to the poor house (*Albergo dei poveri*) or were placed as apprentices, in the case of unmarried girls, the home's tutelary role could continue for their entire life and, in fact, unmarried girls were permitted to return to the home at any age (Guidi 1991, 41).

A fictional account of the life of one such girl provides a picture of the Annunziata prior to unification and holds an important place in the history of that institution. Published in 1839, Antonio Ranieri's *Ginevra o l'orfana*

dell' Annunziata (*Ginevra or the Orphan of the Annunziata*) created a scandal, a much-cited prelude to that of 1897. *Ginevra* is a muckraking novel—perhaps the first of its kind in Italy—that tells the life story of a foundling girl who faces and survives incredible adversity. Ginevra's first recollection is of the foundling home, and after having been twice taken in by cruel foster parents she is re-abandoned to the Annunziata at the ages of 5 and 11. Ranieri's description of the institution suggests that it was just about as horrible a place in the 1830s as the 1890s and bears comparison to the descriptions that attended the later scandal.⁴⁰

According to Ranieri, the female inmates of the Annunziata might be kept in one of at least four separate sections of the institution, all frequented at one time by Ginevra. The first is the large hall occupied by the wet nurses and the foundlings (apparently up to age seven, though the majority are infants). There are no cribs there and the nurse's charges, usually numbering three or four, sleep in the same filthy bed with her. At the age of seven, by which time most of the surviving boys have left as foster children and apprentices, the remaining girls are arbitrarily sent to either the *convento* or the *alunnato*. The *alunnato*, only created in the 1830s, is housed on a luminous upper floor and has a fixed limit of 100 girls. Attended by nuns, the *alunne*, as they are called, live a bearable existence: reasonably fed, dressed, and housed, they receive lessons in sewing and other traditionally feminine occupations; Ginevra also learns to read and write and attends (ineffective) French lessons.

By contrast, the *convento*, numbering never more than 250 inmates, is housed on a damp and dark lower floor, and life there is miserable. Living in semidarkness, the girls sleep on planks and are forced by their overseers to work in order to obtain more than the sub-subsistence daily bread ration of 15 ounces (*once*), not to mention decent clothing. The overseers are adult women, themselves Annunziata foundlings. They fancy themselves nuns, but are in fact *oblato*. *Oblatismo*, a well-established tradition, involved the adoption of convent-like regulations including an *oblato* uniform, but not the taking of monastic vows. It is not clear from Ranieri where these *oblato*, described as the furies of the institution, are housed nor how many they number.

In both pre- and post-unification Naples, *oblatismo* provided (along with monasticism) virtually the only alternative women had to life in the conjugal or paternal family, and so there were of course reasons for either the family or the woman (or both) to prefer such a solution. In Naples alone there were dozens of institutions that housed *oblato*; they ranged from homes for "fallen" women to exclusive institutions for the aristocratic and well-to-do. The prerequisite to becoming an *oblato* at the Annunziata was to be an Annunziata foundling oneself.

Both before and especially after unification, *oblatismo* came under attack. According to Guidi:

The figure of the *oblata* became for many Liberals a stereotype that embodied the negative values of the old political order: the superstition and bigotry of religion, moral and political subordination to the priest, resistance to literacy and other civilizing reforms, and the reinforcement of privilege.⁴¹

Following unification and the laicization of publicly funded charitable works like the Annunziata, various measures were taken to curb *oblatismo* including the symbolic one of prohibiting the wearing of the *oblata* garment.

The fourth section of the Annunziata identified by Ranieri consists of the rooms for the *pericolate*, a maternity ward for “fallen” girls where Ginevra goes after her rape (by a priest) and subsequent pregnancy. During her stay it houses 43 girls. Following birth, Ginevra’s baby is immediately sent to the wet nurses as a foundling in accordance with Annunziata rules. Ginevra avoids having to serve as a nurse herself and subsequently flees the Annunziata with her hoped-to-be husband (not the priest).⁴² Ranieri’s novel did succeed, like the 1897 scandal, in bringing about a degree of reform; in particular the king (of the Two Sicilies) increased the home’s budget.⁴³

Prior to unification—the first stage of Italian unification was completed with the capture of Naples in 1861—the Annunziata had been administered by ecclesiastical authorities under the patronage of the ruling Bourbon monarchy.⁴⁴ Following unification, the home was “laicized.” Ecclesiastical authority was replaced by a three-member board appointed by the provincial government, and responsibility for funding the institution placed with both the provincial and municipal administrations.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, the personnel of the home continued to consist primarily of nuns.

This laicization was the first of a series of steps which succeeded in removing some of the religious mystique or superstition which surrounded the home. The next was an 1875 reform including the closing of the turning cradle.⁴⁶ As mentioned earlier, the turning cradle system had come under harsh criticism in Italy and, especially, France, and the last French turning cradle had been closed in 1868 (Rollet-Echallier 1990, 64). In addition to the objections reviewed in the previous section, eliminating the turning cradle was meant to prevent the leaving of older children. The classic horror story in that regard is included in Ranieri’s novel: apparently reflecting an actual if rare occurrence, Ginevra at the age of eleven is rubbed first with oil to facilitate entry and then crammed into the turning cradle and rotated, suffering as a result abrasions and broken bones.

Anonymous abandonment then was replaced by receiving rooms where the infant was presented and had to be accompanied by certificates attesting to the residence and unmarried status of the mother. These certificates were normally supplied by parish priests and the infants brought by the midwives. Secrecy could still be maintained, but the elements for maternity searches were laid in place. Predictably and as hoped, the 1875 reform led to a reduction in the number of foundlings received at the Annunziata.⁴⁷ Opponents of this and later reforms protested that it would lead to an increase in abortion and infanticide. Proponents claimed that it did not, though needless to say verification was virtually impossible.

Elimination of the turning cradle meant that the foundlings no longer went through the symbolic act by which they became *figli della madonna*. The perceived blessing the infants had received by that passage was one of the factors behind a couple of interesting Neapolitan practices. External wet nurses, as has been noted, were paid and preferably came from the countryside—and this observation holds not just for Naples. In Naples, in fact, urban wet nurses were not paid at all. It is surprising, then, that hundreds of Neapolitan families per year did still take in foundlings. Motivations certainly included the desire to replace an infant who had died and to acquire a subsequently useful addition to the family, but the hope of divine benevolence received for bringing a child blessed by the Madonna into one's home also played a role. Being "full of grace" the Annunziata girls might also be attractive as wives. During a brief period in the spring the home was opened to the public in order to allow potential suitors the opportunity to see the girls. Often, it seems, these suitors were sailors who, fearing for their lives in a gale at sea, had begged the Madonna to save them and promised to marry a *figlia dell'Annunziata* if she did (Guidi 1991, 144). Significantly, by the 1890s both of these practices were virtually extinct, and in 1897 the Annunziata administration began paying the usual wages to external wet nurses in the city of Naples.⁴⁸

The 1875 reform included other important if not entirely successful elements as well. It stipulated that unwed mothers be offered subsidies to keep and nurse their "natural" children. This innovation contradicted one of the fundamental premises of the Italian system, and little in this regard was accomplished in Naples prior to the Pucci administration of 1897. Elsewhere, especially in northern Italy, similar programs were at the heart of foundling home reform and would be for decades to come. These subsidies were persistently criticized by the church as encouraging and rewarding immoral behavior.

Another aspect of the 1875 reform was the elimination of the *convento*, described in horrifying detail by Ranieri in 1839. The relatively more pleasant *alunnato* instead survived. Its size grew to several times the intended

100 girls, and, in spite of a new regulation that no female foundling stay at the home past the age of 25 (for boys that age had always been 7), the *alun-nato* continued to include middle aged and old women. Many of these were infirm and had nowhere else to go. As suggested earlier, the *alunnato* would in fact remain an object of criticism 20 years after the 1875 reform.⁴⁹

The addition of the Annunziata maternity hospital, called for in the 1875 reform, was intended to both provide a source of much-needed internal wet nurses (in spite of the as it turned out vain hope that they would no longer be needed) and aid in the encouragement of “filiation” or the keeping of illegitimate children by their mothers. Like the addition of teaching clinics in the home some years before, it imposed new demands on the Annunziata facility and budget, demands that would be blamed in part for the situation uncovered in 1897.⁵⁰

In 1876 Jessie White Mario visited the Annunziata as part of her social investigation of Naples. White Mario was an English expatriate who had accompanied Garibaldi and organized the field hospital during his conquest of Sicily and southern Italy in 1860–1861. By that time and in spite of an earlier infatuation with the general, she was married to another Italian republican, Alberto Mario. Following unification she lived out the rest of her life (till 1906) in Italy and was an important social reformer there. Following a suggestion from the noted *meridionalista* Pasquale Villari, White Mario went to Naples in 1876 from where she published a series of newspaper articles on Neapolitan poverty and charitable works that were collected the following year in a volume entitled *La miseria in Napoli* (*Poverty in Naples*).⁵¹ White Mario had in fact toured the Annunziata in 1860 together with Garibaldi following his capture of Naples. She recalled with horror the squalor she had found there. When she returned 16 years later, the 1875 reforms had just been introduced under the able direction of Nicola De Crescenzo. De Crescenzo’s tenure at the Annunziata seems to have marked something of a golden age for the institution as White Mario found the home transformed into a model hospice. In marked contrast to the situation 20 years later as well, linens were clean and abundant, there was plenty of water, and everyone ate well. The workshops and schools were tidily run. Nonetheless the infants were generally sickly and mortality high as the foundling to wet nurse ratio was still two or three to one. White Mario, like Pucci after her, identified the *alun-nato* (and conservatory) as the major problem. She criticized the provision of life-long care as well as the activities taught to these women (embroidery, glove making, choral singing, etc.) as encouraging a life of relative luxury and poorly preparing them for either domestic work or marriage to a working-class spouse. Indeed, the only way for these women to maintain

such a lifestyle outside of the home was prostitution, a category to which De Crescenzo conceded the Annunziata made a large contribution. White Mario charged that the money spent on the *alunne* and *oblato* should instead be used to insure that there be a unique wet nurse for each foundling and that the *alunne* should be trained to replace the mostly foreign nuns who staffed the many Neapolitan charitable works (White Mario 1978, 109–34).

The situation of course deteriorated subsequently and the 1897 scandal led to renewed scrutiny of the Annunziata. The journalist Matilde Serao's series on the Annunziata was based on a visit made prior to the outbreak of the scandal and provides important details on the conditions of the home. Presumably it preceded any cosmetic attempts made by the administration to put forward a better image, though it should be noted again that Serao's paper was among those least critical of the administration when the scandal did break. Serao's visit included the reception room with its walled-up turning cradle, the adoption room, the nursing hall, and the infirmary. According to her description, wet nurses normally brought in the foundlings, reporting their birth date and the neighborhood in which the birth was registered and declaring the infants of unknown parentage (needless to say not much of a guarantee against the abandonment of legitimate children). Baptism took place in the attached chapel, but the medical visit only occurred the next morning when the physicians made their rounds, leaving an interim period when the foundling might infect the wet nurse to whom he or she was assigned.⁵² The nursing halls seem to have changed since Ranieri's day as the infants were kept in cradles (*culle*) holding two infants and cribs (*lettucci*) holding three. The wet nurses sat next to these cradles and cribs, presumably on a chair or bed (White Mario had noted the addition of separate beds as part of the post-unification reforms) (White Mario 1978, 116). Serao's adoption hall corresponds to Ranieri's *parlatorio* where Ginevra was twice selected by foster parents. The number of older children so "adopted," however, seems to have been few as Serao noted that over the past seven years only 20 foundlings left in the home had survived past weaning. The major activity in this hall was instead the consignment of nursing infants to paid external wet nurses. The "infirmaries" visited by Serao, housed on the third floor, had been added since unification. At the time of her visit, they were in disarray, filled with the dust and debris created by renovations linked to the Neapolitan *sventramento* (an urban renewal project). They had apparently been in this state for years. Indeed the general filth of the environment seems by Serao's visit to have reverted to its pre-unification state, an observation subsequently confirmed by Pucci.

The Foundling Home Investigation

The Annunziata scandal raised the foundling home question to a new level of national prominence. It was not, however, a new question. In fact, not long after unification the Italian Chamber of Deputies passed a law regulating provincial and *comune* administrations that assigned responsibility for foundlings to those administrations and anticipated a subsequent law specifically regulating foundling care.⁵³ The most significant efforts in this regard prior to the Annunziata scandal included a law proposed by Nicotera, when interior minister in 1877, and another by Tullio Minelli, a deputy and director of the Rovigo foundling home, in 1892. Neither, however, made it to a vote. And one year before the Annunziata revelations, the Chamber of Deputies had in fact debated (inconclusively) a foundling home law that would have imposed one standard practice throughout the peninsula.

Nor were the Annunziata revelations unprecedented. Earlier instances revealed in fact still more tragic situations. Cosenza, for example, a city in the Calabrian Apennines that still had a high rate of foundling mortality at century's end as measured by the Foundling Home Investigation, also had the misfortune to have been the subject of an early and often-cited study revealing that of the nearly 6000 foundlings *kept at the home* there during period 1865–1874, 99 percent had died.⁵⁴ In another example, an 1884 investigation revealed that of 1459 foundlings admitted to the foundling home of Modica (southeastern Sicily), 1456 died “before their period of care (*allevamento*) was finished.”⁵⁵ And there was plenty of evidence of high foundling mortality in places as widely spread as Palermo, Messina, Avellino, Rome, Padua, Sondrio, and Piacenza. In fact, a foundling mortality level of about 50 percent in the first year of life is not an unreasonable estimate.⁵⁶ None of these situations, however, inspired the sort of reaction that met the Annunziata figures reported in 1897. By that time Italian public opinion had apparently become more sensitive to the fate of the nation's marginalized children.

Throughout the period leading up to the Foundling Home Investigation, foundling care in Italy had escaped the centralizing tendency of the unified state. Administrative boards for the homes were appointed locally, and the 1865 law cited earlier stipulated that financial support of foundlings be shared between the *comuni* and the provinces.⁵⁷ The minister of the interior could exercise authority through the prefects though little seems to have been done in this regard. In the case of the Annunziata, for example, initiative for the GPA investigation came directly from Cavasola in Naples rather than from Rome. As a result of this situation, earlier regional variations persisted well after unification, and still more

significant points of divergence evolved subsequent to creation of the kingdom. Following the example set in France where, again, the last turning cradle was closed in 1868, many *comuni* and provinces introduced foundling home reform in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Others, however, did not, and the result was that the traditional Italian system persisted in the South alongside turning cradle closures and partial reforms like the Neapolitan one of 1875. The continued practice of anonymous abandonment throughout much of the South raised the ire of, especially, northern Liberals who saw it as a sign of Italian backwardness. By contrast, in the North more radical reforms had been introduced, though ones of questionable legality. In Milan, for example, the home carried out maternity searches to encourage filiation, and in Rovigo the home had been virtually eliminated as part of a program to force potentially abandoning mothers to keep their children. Probably at no other time was there such a diversity of practices and at a moment when foundling care remained an important issue and expense.

The Annunziata scandal then acted as a catalyst in the move to introduce national standards of foundling care, though a seasoned commentator like Jessie White Mario could remark not long after the outbreak of the scandal:

Once again, horrifying news from the Annunziata foundling home of Naples has traveled through Italy like an electric shock: of the 856 infants received there in a single year, 853 have died. The press carried the story for a week; an interpellation was presented in parliament; a scapegoat was dragged up to placate centuries of national guilt; the administration resigned; a royal commissioner was appointed; there is talk of a new investigation; and, as usual, the tragedy ends in a farce. (1897, 7)

It was precocious, though, of White Mario to declare the affair a farce already in 1897. There were indeed signs that the Annunziata revelations awoke, at least temporarily, Italian public opinion to the plight of foundlings (Battarossi 1897; Berti 1897; Conforti 1897). Moreover, the fate of the administrators, or the physicians if they instead were responsible for the Neapolitan “massacre,” was yet to be determined; and the parliamentary investigation she refers to did take place, providing a general (and alarming) picture of the state of foundling care in Italy. It was not until after that investigation was completed and published and legislative proposals languished undiscussed in parliament that political concern can be said to have again lapsed into a convenient state of inaction and amnesia.

The question of a national foundling home law was in fact raised again in the Chamber of Deputies not long after the initial uproar over the Annunziata had died down. Because of the difficulty of fashioning a law

that would function throughout Italy, the government decided to first carry out a parliamentary investigation of foundling home legislation and practice both at home and abroad. A Royal Commission composed of parliamentarians, appointed officials, and physicians was charged with carrying out the investigation and drafting legislation. Notably, it was to be an investigation carried out by means of correspondence (rather than more onerous field work for example). In June and July 1897, provincial physicians were instructed by a circular to carry out inspections of foundling care services. Further information was solicited from the prefects and foundling home directors in August 1898. Their responses were compiled by the commission's secretary Enrico Raseri, a high-ranking statistician with a special interest in foundling care. The investigation results, together with a summary and analytical *Relazione*, were published in 1900.⁵⁸

During the three years of the investigation, foundling care did not figure prominently in parliamentary discussion. In December 1898 one deputy at least did raise the issue, lamenting, as White Mario had predicted, that apathy had reasserted itself in spite of the ongoing massacre of the innocents. *L'onorevole* Tozzi may have had access to some of the preliminary prefects' reports as he cited high mortality rates (40 percent) in Padua, a medium-sized city West of Venice, and shocking ones (almost 100 percent) in Avellino (East of Naples) and Sicily. With regard to Naples, he questioned Pucci's accomplishments; indeed his primary aim was to discredit foundling homes in general, claiming that much better results had been achieved in those provinces that had never had one or, like Rovigo, had eliminated it. Prime Minister Pelloux,⁵⁹ responded that he expected results from the Foundling Home Investigation after the Christmas holiday. One member of the commission (Celli), did make a preliminary revelation on this occasion regarding mortality at the Annunziata, namely that the 1895 survivors had been about 200 rather than three, and that this level of survivorship was not out of the ordinary. In spite of Pelloux's expectations, the report did not appear for another year, on the occasion of which Simeoni could triumphantly proclaim that foundlings died at even higher rates in other provinces than they did in Naples.⁶⁰

Indeed the Foundling Home Investigation report did specifically state that not only were the Neapolitan mortality figures exaggerated, but a more general review had revealed higher rates in other homes.⁶¹ For the years 1893–1896 and using the usual ratio of deaths to foundlings less than one year old divided by the total number of foundlings (again aged 0–1) admitted to the home, the investigation found rates ranging from 20–25 percent in several Piedmontese and Tuscan homes to over 50 percent in two Lombard locations and several more in the South and Sicily. The highest reported rate of all was for Padua (67.3 percent), and Naples at 49.2 was

considerably above the national average of 39.2.⁶² These figures were of course only as accurate as the records on which they were based. More careful monitoring generally translated into higher rates and this may in part explain why Padua had such a high one, located as it is in the generally well-administered region of Venetia. Regional rates, including also foundlings in those *comuni* that did not have foundling homes, were for 1890–1897 lowest in Abruzzo (29.7 percent), Puglia (31.3), and Sardinia (31.9), and highest in Venetia (42.9) and Campania (42.0); the national average was 37.4.⁶³ By comparison, the Italian mortality rate for all infants was about 18 percent, still relatively high by European standards.⁶⁴

At the time of the investigation, 120 foundling homes were operating in 49 (out of a total of 69) provinces. Most of those provinces without foundling homes nonetheless operated receiving halls (possibly equipped with turning cradles) where infants could be left and then assigned directly to wet nurses. Some homes openly accepted legitimate children of impoverished parents while others did not, and those with turning cradles could of course not easily prevent this sort of abandonment. Interesting to note, already by 1879–1881, turning cradle abandonments accounted for only about 30 percent of the total. The majority were instead direct consignments (and about 8 percent criminal—side of the road, church door—abandonments).⁶⁵

The average annual number of abandonments in Italy for the years 1893–1896 was just under 30,000, or about one abandonment for every 33 births. Abandonment, then, was still a major social problem, though total recorded abandonments had declined between 1879 and 1896 by 16.5 percent. Taking a slightly longer view, abandonment in Italy about halved during the Liberal period from around 40,000 in 1870 to around 20,000 in 1914 (see figure 1.1).⁶⁶ This decline occurred in spite of population growth and was a first sign that the foundling problem would ultimately take care of itself.⁶⁷ Of the just over 132,000 foundlings (all ages) receiving public assistance at the end of 1896 only about 3,000 were in the foundling homes while the rest were farmed out to external wet nurses and foster parents. Confirming earlier studies, the commission found the ratio of foundlings to total births highest in the Center (Umbria, Latium) and in Sicily, low in Venetia, and very low in Sardinia.⁶⁸

The Annunziata does in fact emerge from the investigation as one of the most poorly maintained and administered homes in Italy, though the problems of poor hygiene, lack of heating and hot water, insufficient cribs, neglected medical care, and the draining off of resources by the *alunnato* were all encountered elsewhere as well. About 40 homes (one-third of the total) were rated as good or better and the rest poor.⁶⁹

The conditions and practices regarding both internal and external wet nurses varied widely. Monthly salaries for the internal nurses ranged from

5 lire in Gubbio to 55 in Savona, but were usually between 15 and 25 not including food (a typical wage for a female mill hand at the time was about 1 lira per day—see chapter 3). In the worst case, the foundling to wet nurse ratio ranged from 3 to 11 (!) in Caserta (North of Naples) and got as high as 8 in Avellino and 6 in Como (North of Milan). Some homes required a medical exam for the internal nurses while others did not. Periods of paid external wet (and dry) nursing were generally longer in the North than in the South and ranged from 1 year in Udine in the northeast to 25 years in Oneglia on the Italian Riviera. In most cases the period ranged from 7 to 12 years, while Naples at 18 months was obviously near the bottom of the ranking. Monthly external wet nursing payments ranged from 4.25 to 25 lire which subsequently declined to 2–5 after weaning.⁷⁰

One of the most interesting aspects to emerge from the investigation was a geography of reform which reflected some of Italy's preunification political divisions. In spite of those divisions, turning cradles—about 1200 of them—could be found throughout the peninsula until the mid-1860s. Beginning in 1867, the reform movement, symbolized by the closing of the turning cradle, got underway. By the late 1890s, there were reportedly no *ruote* left in northern Italy and only a handful in the Center. By contrast, there were still over 200 in the continental part of the former Bourbon Kingdom and 118 in Sicily alone.⁷¹

The other regional peculiarities evident in the foundling-home report were the reforms introduced in the former Austro-Hungarian regions, especially Venetia. Fundamental aspects of the traditional Italian system had been the freedom, indeed encouragement, to abandon illegitimate offspring and the maintenance of parental secrecy. As such, the Italian civil code forbade maternity searches in some cases and paternity searches in almost all relative to foundlings.⁷² By contrast, in Austria both were legal and occasionally required and so had been in Venetia (and also Lombardy) prior to unification. Moreover, although Catholic, Austria had generally resisted the establishment of foundling homes and so that tradition, though present, was less well-rooted in the northeast of what became the Italian kingdom (White Mario 1897, 65, 79–85).

Among the principal aims of reformers at the time was a complete revision of the “backward” Italian system, namely the introduction of paternity and maternity searches and the elimination of the foundling homes. In place of traditional Catholic secrecy and abandonment, reformers advocated a system like that prevalent in Protestant northern Europe where parents were financially responsible for all their children, legitimate and otherwise (White Mario 1897, esp. 76–88). Inspired in part by ideas of this sort and in part by considerable possibilities for fiscal savings, a number of provinces had introduced reforms in spite of the legislature's continuing

failure to pass a Foundling Law. The most radical solution was probably that of Belluno, a relatively rural Venetian province at the foot of the Dolomites, where assistance was provided only to those children criminally abandoned, by the roadside for example, and denied to the much larger group of *figli d'ignoti* (presumably illegitimate and legally abandoned). As a result, Belluno's illegitimate children not recognized by their parents (456 for the period 1893–1897) must have either died or been abandoned in neighboring provinces (Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 10; Commissione brefotrofi 1900b, 23–30). A more imaginative solution was devised in Rovigo, an agricultural province at the east end of the Po Valley. Beginning in 1888, Rovigo only took in the criminally abandoned, but at the same time offered another alternative, namely filiation subsidies paid to unwed mothers who recognized and cared for their offspring.⁷³ Filiation in Rovigo increased as a result by a factor of 4, and illegitimate infant mortality, which reportedly dropped from over 50 to 16 percent, was not only the lowest in Italy, but lower than the national average for legitimate infants. The provincial government also enjoyed considerable savings.⁷⁴

The Rovigo system was oft-cited and much praised,⁷⁵ but not unreservedly endorsed by the commission which questioned the efficacy of this system in cases where the motivation for abandonment was not simply poverty, but a question of honor or vice. What of the unwanted fruits of seduction? It doubted further that the Rovigo system could be generally applied given the general intolerance of public opinion for unwed motherhood. Indeed, in other—especially Sicilian—provinces, respondents continued to argue that even closing the turning cradle was impossible and would lead to dramatic increases in abortion and infanticide. Still other provinces were understandably interested in the Rovigo experiment and planned its adoption (Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 8; Commissione brefotrofi 1900b, 31–45).

In 1900, the closing of foundling homes in urban centers like Naples, which had to cope with 2000 or so illegitimate children per year, as compared to Rovigo's 150, seemed impracticable and potentially catastrophic. A compromise solution was instead that adopted in Milan, which had long enjoyed one of the best-run homes in Italy and took in about 1000 foundlings per year at century's end. As in Naples, Rovigo, and 16 other provinces, Milan had introduced subsidies for unwed mothers who kept and raised their own children, though in Milan they were paid out for a full five years. Moreover, Milan, along with a few other provinces, had gone a step further and introduced maternity searches as well. From January 1897, so-called administrative maternity searches and medical exams were carried out in order to determine the health, residence, and marital status of the abandoning mothers.⁷⁶ The intent was to detect hereditary diseases

(especially syphilis), instances of foundlings coming from other provinces, and the abandonment of legitimate children. The women sought out and examined were also encouraged to legally recognize and take back their children and so receive the filiation subsidy; as a result the filiation rate increased from 4 to 34 percent. This innovation represented a significant and near complete reversal with regard to the usual anonymity of the Italian system. Its legality was questionable and in some provinces maternity searches continued to be specifically forbidden by local statutes.⁷⁷ A telling sign of the times, these administrative maternity searches, introduced in Milan and elsewhere, eloquently illustrate the modern substitution of scientific for spiritual authority. In place of the priest who traditionally heard the errant girl or woman's confession, counseled discretion and abandonment, and offered absolution, there stood instead the physician who administered a health exam and encouraged the unwed mother to take back her abandoned child and accept the filiation subsidy.⁷⁸

The motivations behind these reforms were undoubtedly several. Economically, both the Rovigo and Milan reforms represented a savings for hard-pressed provincial budgets, as indeed did the simple closing of the turning cradle and discouragement of legitimate abandonment. With regard to mortality, both keeping infants out of the foundling homes and keeping them with their mothers, married or not, greatly improved survivorship. Reform, then, would lower Italy's high (and in some regions very high) illegitimate infant mortality rate, a rate at once deplorable from a humanitarian view and a distressing sign of Italian backwardness.⁷⁹ Yet both economic and mortality considerations would have been equally valid 50 years before when reforms of this sort were being introduced in France. Did then the reform movement also indicate a revised evaluation of unwed motherhood on the part of ruling-class opinion?

There are signs that it did. The reforms discussed in the Foundling Home Investigation, in particular the move toward filiation subsidies and maternity searches, signaled changing official attitudes regarding illegitimacy and the role of the state in foundling care. Traditionally neither parent had been expected to bear responsibility for children born out of wedlock, and women had been encouraged to abandon their illegitimate children and "save their honor." By the late 1890s, instead, foundling home officials in various parts of the peninsula—in Rovigo and even for a time in Naples—were urging women, though generally not men, to keep their "natural children" and bring them up for all to see.⁸⁰ Needless to say, these new attitudes were not shared by all, in particular not by Catholics, but the Risorgimento and unification had effected a general transition in Italy from religious and aristocratic sources of authority to secular and liberal-bourgeois ones. And while "extreme" attitudes, like that of White Mario

and others who called for male seducers to bear financial responsibility for their dalliances, did not become general, the idea that illegitimacy was a disgrace to be hidden at all costs had given way to a somewhat more enlightened and secular attitude. Moreover, this change was consistent with an observed and general “worsening” of moral conditions in late nineteenth-century Italy.⁸¹

Indeed, it appears that this revised attitude may have characterized both elites and the popular classes, though as is so often the case our sources for this claim are themselves educated and middle-class. A number of commentators at the time noted that the lower classes no longer unequivocally condemned extramarital fertility and displayed a fairly relaxed attitude about sexuality in general; though some added that this change applied primarily to the North. These observers included both the reformers themselves, who had of course a vested interest in arguing that bringing up a bastard child was not, or at least was no longer, generally considered shameful, and also other social observers with a more general interest in the lower classes.⁸²

In one directly relevant example, Ernesto Grassi, director of the Milanese foundling home, reported to the commission that of the approximately 1100 mothers visited since 1897 as a result of the new maternity search policy, half were on second-order or higher births, and so presumably already compromised in the eyes of the community; in any case their “error” could not be put down to inexperience. And of that other half who had instead abandoned a first child, only a few over 200 feared public scandal. He concluded then that the majority of abandoning mothers (80 percent) were public about their pregnancies and unconcerned about maintaining their honor (Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 53). A few years later, the new director of the Annunziata, Gabriele Amendola, was able to carry out a similar study of unmarried women who used Neapolitan birthing hospitals and then sent their infants to the Annunziata. Of these, nearly 60 percent were on second or higher-order births and many expressed little or no shame or embarrassment about their situations. Amendola concluded that little was to be gained from maintaining maternal secrecy in these cases (Amendola 1904, 584–9). Nor is Amendola’s the only indication we have that the moral code of the Neapolitan proletariat did not precisely coincide with traditional bourgeois ideas about honor and virginity. Already in 1877 White Mario had found in fact that prostitution was not only regarded among the Neapolitan lower class as a job like any other, but that the prostitutes themselves might well be (and be regarded as) good mothers (*essere buona madre di famiglia*) (White Mario 1978, 62).

If, then, most unmarried women were not abandoning their children for honor at the end of the century, why were they? Certainly for the same

reason that married women had done so or been constrained to do so in the past, because of poverty, an observation made by many contemporaries. Indeed the argument that abandonment was primarily an economic phenomenon lay behind the whole of the reform movement, which is not to say that some, including for example Amendola, did not continue to argue that foundling homes and in a few cases anonymous abandonment were still needed.⁸³ Evidently, to privilege the economic argument is to take a different view than that presented by Kertzer (1993, esp. 25–8), but he deals primarily with an earlier period and the different conclusion he comes to may be yet another indication of a change in Italian morality at the end of the nineteenth century. In one other example turned up by the Foundling Home Investigation regarding economic motivation and the apparently general acceptance of illegitimacy, a respondent reported that in Syracuse (southeastern Sicily), where there was still a turning cradle, maternity searches were indeed unnecessary as not only were the abandoning mothers almost always known, in 95 percent of the cases the same mothers presented themselves as wet nurses and took on their own children as charges. It would seem that these lower-class women succeeded in introducing by their own means a system of subsidies; another example that fits well into Guidi's analysis of seemingly disempowered women acting as "operators." Similar abuses perpetrated by both married and unmarried women were reported elsewhere in Sicily and in Calabria as well.⁸⁴

The commission's concluding recommendations and proposal for legislation betray the changed attitude discussed earlier. They included first of all elimination of the remaining turning cradles. Tempering the more radical positions, the commission rejected calls for closing the homes themselves and recommended instead keeping them where they already existed and using receiving halls where they did not. In particular, halls were to be established in the more remote *comuni* in order to prevent infants being taken on the long and often fatal journey to urban foundling homes. In general, the Milanese solution was endorsed including recognition of administrative maternity searches as valuable and legitimate and approval of optional five-year filiation subsidies. Contrary to the practices of Belluno and Rovigo, however, provinces were to be required to take responsibility for all *figli d'ignoti* and not only those criminally abandoned. They were also to maintain at least the abovementioned receiving halls in order to coordinate external wet nursing. Periods of external nursing and fostering were to continue till age 10 for boys and, given the greater frequency with which they were returned to the homes, 12 for girls. The homes were instructed to keep better track of the farmed out infants and children, and in provinces without homes a physician was to be appointed to this end. The commission recommended a minimum external wet

nursing wage of 12 lire per month and a maximum foundling to wet nurse ratio in the homes of 2:1.⁸⁵

The commission's proposed law represented an attempt to impose a degree of uniformity in foundling care and also sought to take into account existing regional and provincial differences. In some ways it was a compromise measure as it sought to establish standards regarding acceptance (direct rather than by turning cradle) and the tenure of provincial care, but left it up to the local authorities to determine whether or not to introduce other reforms, in particular filiation subsidies and administrative maternal searches. On the other hand, the proposed law would have put a check on the most audacious reforms.

Given the very different approaches that had developed over the previous decades, a degree of flexibility was certainly needed, an observation borne out by the subsequent experience of the *Annunziata*. In a stark reminder of what the commission recognized as "differences in ideas, habits, and customs" (*Commissione brefotrofi* 1900b, 15), maternal searches like those introduced successfully in Milan were attempted in Naples as well, but had to be abandoned because of the uproar they created. In the words of the Neapolitan Amendola: "It tears at my heart to sadly agree with those who claim we lag behind on the road to progress and civilization" (Amendola 1904, 551). Amendola's lament regarding Neapolitan backwardness serves as a fitting epitaph for the season of reform and debate initiated seven years before at his own *Annunziata*.

By that time (1904), concern about the foundling issue was on the wane and the hoped-for legislation was launched on a low-priority parliamentary trajectory which it would only complete two decades later.⁸⁶ The vicissitudes of that trajectory reinforce the impression that the care of abandoned babies, and eventually the suppression of abandonment altogether, was considered an appropriate task for a modern state, while the immediate obstacles encountered by the Foundling Law were manifestations of the general indifference which reasserted itself with regard to the issue.

Giolitti and the Failure of Reform

Returning to the commission's proposal, it was in fact rather quickly, and with minimal variations presented to the Senate on May 1, 1900 by Prime Minister Pelloux.⁸⁷ The timing was poor, however, as the law did not even come up for discussion before the government fell and new elections were called later that very same month. White Mario's farce seemed to have been realized, though the foundling issue was revived a couple of years later by

the man most likely to get the legislation approved, Giovanni Giolitti. As minister of interior under Zanardelli, Giolitti sent a questionnaire out in late 1902 to all prefects in order to gather information for a new law. The need for more data arose because Giolitti had decided to broaden the legislation to include "morally and materially abandoned children" as well as traditional foundlings.⁸⁸ This addition was a major (and costly) innovation. Concern about morally and materially abandoned children had been growing over the past decade or so. It was a category that included truants, children of delinquent parents, street children, and others not subject to parental or adult supervision (or else supervision deemed inadequate). That category is in fact the focus of chapter 5, and it is in that chapter that we return to a fuller discussion of this legislative history. As it turned out, Giolitti's law was a long time coming and only got presented to the Senate in May 1907.⁸⁹ The section on foundlings closely resembled the law proposed in 1900, though provincial administrations in Giolitti's version would be *required* to pay filiation subsidies for five years to unmarried women who legally recognized their children.

Giolitti's proposal received a thorough discussion in the Senate.⁹⁰ The issue of Italy's relative backwardness and need to emulate the more advanced (*progredate*) nations came up repeatedly. Some senators called for more radical measures, including the legalization and requirement of paternity searches, but Giolitti himself responded that Italy was not prepared for so drastic a step. As evidence he offered that 464 turning cradles were still receiving nearly 5,000 foundlings per year.⁹¹ His proposal was a first step and would at least eliminate that "barbarous" system. It was approved by a wide margin.

One week later the law was presented to the Chamber of Deputies where it was sent to a commission for study and if necessary revision.⁹² Those revisions took one year to complete. The commission deemed the foundling section of the law too restrictive and introduced greater allowance for regional variations. In particular, the granting of filiation subsidies was left to the discretion of provincial administrations.⁹³ These subsidies had always been criticized, especially by Catholics, as rewards for immorality, and to make them automatic was not only expensive but deprived their advocates of an important line of defense. The Foundling Home Commission, for example, had recommended denying assistance to unwed mothers living in consensual unions, and generally it was felt that women of low character, especially prostitutes, should be ineligible (Commissione brefotrofi 1900b, 61–6). The subsidies were instead intended for young women who had erred once and now wanted to lead a respectable life. What is striking again in this regard, compared to the traditional view, is the recognition that a respectable life was possible in spite

of the onus of raising a child out of wedlock. These sorts of distinctions were already being made by Grassi in Milan, for example, who used the administrative maternity searches to determine which unwed mothers were deserving of the subsidies, a fairly small percentage as it turned out.⁹⁴

The greatest objection to Giolitti's law, however, related to the second part. According to calculations made by a commission of the Assembly of Italian Provinces, the new expenses relating to morally and materially abandoned children, which according to the law were to be paid by local governments, would amount to about 16 million lire annually, a bit more than the 14 million already spent on foundling care. This was indeed a huge expense and threatened to break many a chronically strapped local budget (Calisse 1908). In response to these objections the parliamentary commission recommended that the law be shelved until legislation could be introduced to put local finances in order. Before anything of the sort could be done, however, the legislature came to an end, killing the proposal.

Giolitti persisted nonetheless. One month into the new legislature (May 1909), he presented the legislation again, incorporating various amendments suggested by the commission.⁹⁵ He challenged the estimated additional cost of the law, but made no attempt to alter the economic consequences for *comune* or province. It was once again sent to commission, never to emerge. In a telling and rare commentary a few years later (1912), one observer noted, in contrast to the general sentiment detected following the Annunziata scandal of 1897, that attempts to introduce legislation had failed because public opinion had not rallied to the cause of foundlings (Magnani 1912). Certainly there had been both fiscal and procedural obstacles to the introduction of foundling legislation, but those sorts of obstacles can be overcome by political will and a strong public opinion. Both, indeed, seem to have been lacking by about 1909.

Nor again should the demographic context be ignored. For while a few isolated voices had begun to note a decline in Italian fertility, the majority of Italians could not help but be aware of the massive and growing level of Italian emigration in the period. Insofar as one bothers to think about such things, it must have seemed to most that Italy simply had too many people, not too few. And in spite of the observations of Giolitti and others regarding Italy's relative backwardness regarding foundling care, it is no surprise that concern about that population (as future producers) was muted as compared to other national contexts where child and infant welfare took on special urgency because of fears about population decline.

Those sorts of fears would only come to the fore in Italy after the war. Just before it, in May 1914, the foundling project had been revived, but again to no avail.⁹⁶ It was instead only in early 1923 that a Foundling Law was finally passed, less than four months after the Fascists had come to

power. That law was more radical than the proposals that preceded it. It did finally eliminate the turning cradles, several hundred of which were still operating, and also stipulated *obligatory* administrative maternity searches and nursing subsidies for unwed mothers recognizing their “natural” children.⁹⁷

By 1923, though, the Annunziata scandal was a distant memory. Nevertheless, the law that finally did pass owed something to that scandal of 26 years before. The political climate had, of course, changed dramatically. Not only were Italian backwardness and the “shortcoming” of Liberal democracy to be overcome by a new, decisive, and forward-looking Fascist regime, but we see in the Foundling Law one of the first signs that official opinion at least had completed its swing from a pre-war psychology of surplus population to a new Fascist one of population obsession.

Conclusion

Throughout the Liberal period, foundling care suffered from malign neglect, as in the context of limited economic growth, under-employment, and emigration, the plight of abandoned infants was left to underfunded provincial administrations. From time to time a voice was raised, pointing out that the conditions in which foundlings were kept was inconsistent with modern European civilization. But these voices tended to be isolated in time and space and were followed by renewed apathy. As the Neapolitan scandal reveals, awareness of the generally deplorable conditions in which foundlings were kept was generally ignored and revelation of those conditions inspired considerable shock. The situation in 1897 differed somewhat from earlier instances, however, as the local scandal in Naples garnered widespread attention and led to a nationwide parliamentary investigation and proposals for reform. It also led to improved conditions in the Neapolitan home, but as if that improvement were sufficient to placate public opinion, indifference then reasserted itself in a period when other signs of surplus population became still more insistent.

The Annunziata scandal also spoke to concerns about the Italian South and Naples that had emerged as national problems by the 1890s. In particular, it played a role in that season of hope and disappointment that stretched from the *risanamento* initiated in 1885 to the Special Law for Naples of 1904.⁹⁸ As discussed earlier, the much-criticized foundling home administration derived from the same political culture that produced the corrupt local administrations of the 1890s and inspired the parliamentary Saredo Investigation of 1900–1902.⁹⁹ The Annunziata scandal itself, coming as it did almost 40 years after unification and following an expensive

effort to revive the former Bourbon capital, combined then with other distressing signs to suggest that the Liberal state had made little progress in resolving the southern question. It seemed yet another symptom of Neapolitan corruption and southern backwardness. Indeed that very symbolism may also help to account for the degree of interest generated. Yet as we have seen, the subsequent national investigation uncovered similar situations in other parts of the peninsula. Foundling neglect as it turned out was not an exclusively Neapolitan or even southern problem, but an Italian one.

With regard to the larger themes addressed in this book, the Annunziata scandal and subsequent investigation came at just that historical moment when public and official anxiety over marginalized children reached a peak. As we see in the chapters that follow, foundlings were one of several categories of Italian children for whom the alarm was sounded in the late 1890s and 1900s. Italian society, seeking its place alongside the other modern powers of Europe and North America, came to the realization that it had an obligation to succor its least fortunate children. Those other categories, and the successes and failures of public and private initiatives to offer assistance, are explored in the chapters that follow.

Epilogue: Where are the Orphans?

One of the more striking features of the political and professional discussion of children in Liberal Italy is the scarcity of references to orphans. The foundling literature, for example, is much richer, and yet the two categories share much in common. Both foundlings and orphans lack parents, or at least a parental presence capable of providing material support. Hence both groups require some form of publicly provided tutelage and care, often in an institutional setting. Nor can the different levels of attention paid the two groups be easily explained in quantitative or economic terms; by most measures, foundlings and orphans presented challenges of similar scale. Consider that at the time of the 1897–1900 Foundling Home Investigation the level of abandonment in Italy stood at about 30,000 per year, and according to a 1902 study, the total number of foundlings receiving assistance at the time was instead a bit over 130,000. Most of these of course were not residing in Italy's 120 foundling homes but instead in the homes of their nurses. By contrast, that same study calculates the population of orphans receiving assistance at a bit over 36,000. These instead were, almost by definition, housed in one of Italy's 700 orphanages. The total annual budget for orphan care was 12 million lire, for foundlings 14 million (ISTAT 1950, 11). And yet, in spite of the fact that, after children in *asili* (see chapter 5), foundlings and orphans were

the two largest groups of assisted children at the time, expressions of concern about orphans are surprisingly rare. Why is that the case?¹⁰⁰

A partial answer must lie in the fact that, barring as yet unforeseen improvements in adult mortality, orphans were an inevitable part of the landscape of public assistance. One found orphans, perhaps in similar numbers, in more advanced nations like England and America. Foundlings, instead, were at once a product of Italy's Catholic past and an ancillary of poverty. They were a reminder of the relative, and much lamented, "backwardness" of the Italian state, even decades after unification. In particular, the continued practice of anonymous abandonment, especially in the turning cradles, was a still more poignant reminder of the persistence in Italy of practices associated with a premodern time of superstition and unenlightened ideas.

The very ordinariness and stability of the orphan population in Italy instead meant that orphans did not play an important role in the growing perception that Italian state and society needed to come to grips with the problem of Italy's marginalized children. And it is the urgency of that perception and the search for ways to protect those children, eventually integrate them into the nation, that is the primary focus of this book. Nonetheless, a study of youth and marginalization that overlooks a group as large as orphans would certainly be incomplete.

Orphanages were spread pretty evenly up and down the peninsula. As the numbers related earlier suggest, each one assisted on average about 50 children per year; given an undetermined level of turnover and the fact that some children must have only resided in the orphanages for brief periods, the average population of the homes must have been somewhat lower.¹⁰¹ Actual sizes not surprisingly varied considerably from small rural homes with 5 or 6 charges to large urban ones with hundreds. According to the Welfare Law of 1890,¹⁰² the municipal *Congregazioni di Carità* (Welfare or Charity Committees) were to take the necessary measures to insure care of abandoned children, including specifically orphans. The actual administration of orphanages instead fell more often to religious orders than to local authorities. In any case, most were staffed by nuns.

Of course orphanages, like foundling homes, had been around for centuries. Some of those still operating in our period could trace their origins back to the sixteenth century or before. Others, instead, perhaps quite a few, were founded in the decades here explored. One important motive for the creation of orphanages was the recognition that poor children, lacking parents or guardians, did not fare well in poor houses and *Ospedali* occupied largely by adults. We encounter a parallel situation below in relation to prisons. Orphanages then sought to provide refuge to these children.¹⁰³

Significantly, "orphan" at the time did not necessarily conform to our present-day idea of a child who has lost both parents. Orphanage statutes and other literature of the period refer specifically to children orphaned of their father, orphaned of their mother, orphaned of both parents, and simply lacking an adequate guardian; drunks, thieves, prostitutes, and the like were generally deemed inadequate. In one example, the large orphanage in Milan for boys and girls specifically accepted children orphaned of both parents or of their fathers. In 1906, then, a foundation endowed initially by the queen was established to cover the expenses of girls, and then also boys, orphaned specifically of their mothers, a group according to some observers still more needy than children orphaned of their fathers.¹⁰⁴

Generally speaking, orphanages were either for boys or for girls, though some of the larger homes, in Rome and Milan for example, might have sections for both. Ages of admission varied but were generally not younger than 6 or 7; upper limits for admission included 9, 10, 12, and 14. The leaving age was usually 18 or 21. Orphanages were almost always intended for poor children lacking one or both parents, or in any case parental-like care, and coming from the local territory (usually the *comune*). Funding and consequently the number of places was almost inevitably limited and often failed to satisfy demand. Financial support for the orphans might come from the institute itself (some had considerable endowments), from local administrations, or from other charitable works. If there were still space after local poor had been provided for, many homes allowed for the admission of orphans from well-off families or from other *comuni*, on a paying basis. In addition to the age requirement, inductees were to be of good health, not mentally retarded, or otherwise handicapped (in which case there were presumably other institutions that could house them).

The two primary activities of the orphans were work and study. Girls learned typically feminine activities like sewing, embroidery, ironing, and so on. Boys instead tended to apprentice in artisan workshops. Both sorts of activities might take place either inside or outside the orphanage. In some cases the money earned (or at least a part of it) was put in a savings account that the orphan would then receive when he or she left the home. Many orphanages also provided dowries for the girls, and marriage might well mean a younger leaving age than the usual 18 or 21.

When the newly unified Italian state took over administration of charitable works in the 1860s and 1870s, it also sought to suppress (and did) many religious corporations which ate up resources and engaged in little more than an endless series of religious observances. Among the targets of Liberal criticism were those conservatories that trained girls primarily in devotions, producing ultimately a class of illiterate oblates. The same concern attached to orphanages, and one can still find in the

early twentieth-century criticism of “Medieval” (e.g. Velletri) and “parasitic” (Syracuse) institutions where orphan girls received no useful training. Of particular importance was elementary school instruction, and inevitably reform of the criticized institutions involved the introduction of that sort of schooling, either in the orphanage itself or at the local public school. By then of course elementary school had long been obligatory in Italy (since 1877) and a primary tool used by the state to encourage a sense of national unity. The long-running conflict between the Catholic Church and the Italian state also manifested itself in conflicts that arose in orphanages, for example in Siena where the statute specified that only Catholic orphans were to be accepted. Instructions of that sort were especially problematic when stipulated as part of large (usually preunification) endowments that continued to provide most of the institute’s income.¹⁰⁵

The typical age restrictions for admission to orphanages raise a difficult question: What happened to orphans under the age of 6 or 7? We explore below one exceptional institute (in Rome) that specifically catered to them, but it might be reasonable to imagine that in many parts of the peninsula those children ended up in foundling homes. Statistics for 1890–1892, for example, reveal that foundling homes in that three-year period accepted 1143 already-weaned (*da pane*) children, or 381 per year (DIRSTAT 1894). If weaning took place between 18 and 24 months, then might this figure represent the population of two to six-year-old orphans? Given the figure cited earlier of 36,000 institutionalized orphans, say aged 6 to 18, one would have to predict a larger number in the younger age group.¹⁰⁶ This remains then something of an unanswered question, though the foundling home toddlers may have been true orphans while the other categories that eventually made their way into the orphanages may at these early ages have continued to live with a single parent (or both parents), perhaps in a poor house. It seems still more likely that nursing-age (0–1) true orphans would find their way into the foundling home population and system, the only place where they were likely to find adequate care, namely that from wet nurses. The porous institutional boundaries and difficulties of definition suggested by this brief analysis are themes to which we return.

As mentioned earlier, Rome did have a place for the younger orphans.¹⁰⁷ The Protettorato di San Giuseppe was founded in the capital thanks to the initiative of three women and was officially recognized as a charitable work (*ente morale*) in 1891. It was located outside Porta Pia on the Via Nomentana. Its director, a nun, described its aim as that of “offering shelter and upbringing (*educazione*) to orphaned, abandoned or in any case neglected children, regardless of religion or nationality.” She further described her institute as “the only one that takes in and cares for orphans

and abandoned children from the age of two, and does not send them away even if they are younger.” Leaving age instead was 8. In 1901 the *Protettorato* reportedly housed 171 girls and 165 boys, 336 children in all of whom over 150 were under the age of 5. Staffed by 35 nuns, the institute received tens of thousands of lire per year from the city of Rome and from the Interior Ministry to take care of the city’s needy waifs.¹⁰⁸

Orphans then, always loosely defined, were a constant and significant presence throughout the period with which we are concerned. And while one does not have to search long to find instances of suffering, mistreatment, and hardship among the category, they never made it fully on to the social agenda of the period (except as part of the larger group of “morally and materially abandoned youth” examined further in chapter 5). Other categories like foundlings that did—working children in and out of Italy, juvenile delinquents, street children—are explored in the chapters that follow.

Emigrating Children

Maria Paretta and Abbot Santol

Maria Paretta, tall, well-built, black-haired with a rosy, freckled complexion, regular nose and small mouth, ran away from her home in Naples on September 8, 1903 at the age of 16. Attempts by the police to find her proved fruitless until, in November, her father received a letter from a friend who had seen Maria in Marseilles. There, assuming the false identity of Olimpia Vittozzi, age 22, she worked as a prostitute in a brothel on Rue Boufferie; the friend had seen Maria at her previous place of employment, a similar establishment on Rue Crantuni.

Alerted to this situation, the Foreign Ministry, through its consul in Marseilles, began arrangements for the repatriation of Maria, though there was no legal basis for coercing her. A query, however, to the Neapolitan prefect revealed that Maria's parents were either unable or unwilling to pay the cost of her return journey, 70 lire (probably equivalent to several weeks' wages for a male laborer). By January of 1904 Maria had been hospitalized, likely for a venereal infection, and the Interior Ministry (authority over both the police and prefect) had agreed to pay Maria's fare from the border (Ventimiglia) back to Naples. Maria's father, however, was out of work and declared in mid-February that he could not pay even the remaining 25 lire required but would as soon as he could. At that point the archival trail comes to an end and so we learn nothing more of Maria's fate. Did she get well? Did she return home? Did she want to return home? Was the consul able to compel her to do so? Did her parents want her back? And what was her father's friend doing in Rue Crantuni?¹

Beyond these human aspects, Maria's story—or the brief part of it we are able to glimpse from the police archives—does however tell us something about official attitudes regarding a problem considered critical at the time, namely the so-called white slave trade, as well as offering insight into

the general issue of the emigration of minors, especially when unaccompanied by their parents (or perhaps any adult at all). Although the scale of white slaving was undoubtedly exaggerated by the press in Italy as elsewhere, Italian women and girls were by 1903 pitching up in brothels at various foreign locations (principally Mediterranean ones). In addition to the general concern about women being kidnapped and forced into prostitution abroad, the Italian Emigration Law of 1901 specifically established punishments for those who induced minor-age women and girls to emigrate for the purpose of prostitution. Clearly whoever had accompanied Maria on her journey to France—imagining that she did not travel alone—might have violated this law.

Specifically, cases like Maria's (together with article 3 of the Emigration Law) expose an increasing concern on the part of the state (and so bourgeois opinion) for the fate and suffering of child emigrants, a category that was of course expanding in these years of growing massive emigration. They also reveal—as did the foundling issue reviewed in chapter 1—the raw nerve of Italian official self-consciousness about the image of the nation abroad. Perhaps no phenomenon was more sensitive in this regard than emigration, especially when the face of Italian emigration included thieves, murderers, anarchists, prostitutes, and the like. Little matter that these groups constituted a small minority, their place in the perception of Italian migration far outweighed their numerical significance. Finally, Maria's case reveals the impotence of the Italian state with regard to both the protection and the control of Italian emigrants once they had passed out of Italian territory.

* * *

At 5:20 on the morning of December 28, 1908 the city of Messina, Sicily's gateway to the mainland, was struck by a devastating earthquake that destroyed over 90 percent of the city and killed 60,000 people, nearly half of its population (a figure that rises to nearly 80,000 if one includes casualties from the equally hard-hit Reggio Calabria across the strait).² Among the survivors, or so he would later claim, was a tall, fat, aging French abbot missing a few teeth named Joseph Santol. Abbot Santol headed a Paris-based organization called the *Oeuvre internationale pour le placement familial*. Shortly after the earthquake Santol was back in France making arrangements for the placement of 1000 children orphaned by the disaster. The following March he was in Palermo, where many of the homeless had fled, staying with the Archbishop of Monreale and signing up 200 children, 150 of whom would go to France and the other 50 to Catholic families in England.

Curious about the abbot's activities, the Palermo prefect appealed to the police and Interior Ministry for information on Santol. In a letter signed by Giolitti, the ministry communicated the suspicion that Santol was in fact not a benefactor of children but rather a procurer of child labor for the by then notorious French glass factories. He should be carefully watched and unsuspecting parents warned against entrusting their children to him. In fact, already in January the Commissariato Generale dell'Emigrazione (General Emigration Committee or CGE, created by the 1901 Emigration Law) had warned the Interior Ministry about Santol's plans. The French press it seems had exposed the suspicious abbot. He had been tried in a Parisian court in 1900 for the illegal transportation and carnal abuse of children and again in 1907 for falsifying children's ages (presumably to circumvent child labor laws). In both cases he had been acquitted but his reputation did not escape untarnished.

Alerted regarding the ministry's opposition to his plans, Santol left Palermo at the end of March for Rome. On the way he stopped in both Catania (where hosted by the cardinal) and Messina to continue his enrolments. Starting in Messina he was trailed by plainclothes policemen. In Rome Santol appealed directly to Giolitti but apparently got no satisfaction as he left the city on April 3 for France, again under observation. Already by the middle of the month Santol wrote from Paris that he had secured financial support from the French Red Cross and the donation of a ship to transport the children from Palermo to Marseilles. Celebrations were planned for their arrivals in Paris and London. Santol did not, however, intend to return to Italy before receiving the necessary official authorization, a stipulation he made more than once but then apparently rescinded as in May he was back in Sicily. Ultimately, though, his plan seems to have been blocked. The Italian ambassador in Paris had gathered both favorable and highly negative assessments of Santol from reputable sources but concluded that it would be best for the orphans to remain in Italy, as they apparently did.³

Abbot Santol's case is notable for its scale and unusual if indeed he was trying to pass off a child labor scheme as a charitable work. On the other hand the export of Italian children for labor, begging, and other purposes had been a source of official concern for at least four decades by then, which explains the particular sensitivity and suspicion aroused in both the prefect and ministry. Already by that time the issues of beyond what age should one be allowed to emigrate, with whom and for what purposes had been debated in parliament and regulated by several laws. It was again the 1901 Emigration Law that forbade enlisting children under the age of 15 for emigration and work in unhealthy occupations. Primary among the unhealthy occupations was work at the French glass factories where

officials suspected Santol intended to send the Sicilian children (or the boys in any case).

The stories of both Maria Paretta and Abbot Santol typically date from the last decade or so prior to the Great War when Italian emigration reached its highest levels, a period also characterized by the confluence and peak of anxieties about the various children's issues here explored. But Paretta and Santol also fit into a larger history of child (or minor-age) emigration that needs exploring for our purposes. The increasing ease of mobility in the decades following unification combined with growing concern about child welfare to progressively pathologize the emigration of children unaccompanied by parents or guardians. Not surprisingly that phenomenon generated ever more concern as general Italian emigration assumed ever greater proportions.

Wandering Trades

The first child legislation passed in Italy was an 1873 law prohibiting the use of children in so-called wandering trades (*professioni girovaghe*). Beginning in the late 1860s, consular and newspaper reports from Paris, London, New York, and other cities complained about the growing presence in city streets of Italian children, often very young children, usually playing instruments or displaying animals in order to earn money, a poorly disguised form of begging in the eyes of many and simply a nuisance in the eyes of others. Legislators responded in a relatively rapid few years with the 1873 law.

The children in question came mostly from the desperately poor South, in particular a group of villages in the mountains of Basilicata including Viggiano (South of Potenza) where much of the population had long practiced and depended on the wandering music trade (the so-called *zampognari*⁴), traveling to towns and cities to play for passersby and pass the hat. Then, as now, young performers inspired compassion and consequently received larger offerings. Improved communication and political unification allowed these minstrels to wander farther still, and some of them took along the children of other villagers who were likely hard pressed to feed an extra mouth at home. As the destinations became international ones some of the villagers abandoned the music trade itself and either managed bands of young players or else specialized in enlisting children and accompanying them to the foreign cities where they would be handed over to a local *padrone*.

For reasons we explore below a legal apparatus developed around this practice according to which the agents or procurers entered into a contract with the children's parents. Those contracts usually stipulated that the

child work for the agent for a period of three years. The agent was responsible for feeding and clothing the child and agreed to send a fixed annual fee to the parents. Bands of these children would then follow the agent, by rail, by ship from Naples to Marseilles, but also on foot, from the *mezzogiorno* up the Italian peninsula and to their ultimate destinations, a major European city, or else to a port from which they could sail (or more likely steam) to the New World. Along the way they might earn their keep by performing for travelers and in the towns through which they passed, likely on instruments provided by the agent. On arrival, the children were generally housed in dormitories administered either by the agent himself or else by a local procurer who then managed the children's daily routine of wandering and playing and collected their receipts at day's end.

In some ways there was nothing remarkable about this practice. The contract was similar to a normal apprenticeship agreement for which children might well leave their homes. And while the distance traveled could be long, these young wandering musicians were part of a growing vanguard of Italian emigrants; this was the eve of the era of mass emigration. Viewed differently, there was great cause for concern. As compared to an apprenticeship which presumably taught a trade, the activities of these urban waifs was by most accounts a barely disguised form of begging. What would they be good for afterward if not a life of mendicancy and, worse still, crime? Moreover, whereas apprenticeships were normally geared to ages appropriate to a child's physical abilities, for the street music trade (and variations), there was a premium on youth, and so one encounters stories of the exploitation of children at very tender ages indeed, reportedly as young as 5 or 6.

And while parents could certainly contract their children out as apprentices, emigration complicated matters as there was no way for Italian authorities to enforce the contract or prevent its abuse. Some equated the practice to slavery, labeling it a *tratta dei fanciulli* (trade in children), and certainly no one had the right to sell their children into slavery. Investigation into the trade, by Italians and foreigners alike, revealed that the children might be kept in filthy and miserable conditions, underfed, overworked, and in some cases badly abused. Typical was the story of the child severely beaten for returning home, perhaps long after dark, without having collected his or her daily quota.

So we might explain the great and precocious attention the issue garnered—it was raised prior, for example, to the general issue of child labor in Italy—to the tender age of some of the children, the occasionally horrible conditions and treatment they had to endure, and the fact that they were, because abroad, so completely removed from parental authority and state jurisdiction. But that would tell only half the story as it was also

an issue intimately bound up with that of the prestige of the newly formed Italian nation.⁵

Italian children had in fact been migrating abroad for the itinerant work—in particular the sale of plaster figures and as musicians—for at least the whole of the nineteenth century.⁶ Then suddenly in 1868 wandering trades became a problem and the focus of intense scrutiny by Italian public and official opinion. The plight of these poor southern children even inspired a long poem in 1871 by the Catholic poet from Vicenza, Giacomo Zanella, entitled “Il piccolo calabrese”; it tells the story of an 8 year old wandering musician in London (Zanella 1902, 230–309). There are several possible explanations for the sudden interest which the issue inspired. Almost from the moment of unification (1861), the Italian consul in Paris had sent reports about the phenomenon back to Rome, and in 1867, in preparation for the World’s Fair, the Parisian police cracked down on the young beggars wandering the city’s streets, arresting hundreds of Italians. Interesting to note, the crackdown led to a noticeable increase of that same population in New York, a clear sign, if one were needed, of the already global nature of the labor/migration market in the 1860s. Meanwhile, in London, the cacophony of wandering organ grinders inspired Charles Babbage, probably better remembered for having invented the first computer, to initiate in 1860 a campaign against the foreign ragamuffins wandering on English streets. The cause was then taken up in parliament by the brewer M. T. Bass and culminated in the Street Music Metropolis Bill of 1864 which sought to curb the phenomenon (Paulucci di Calboli 1893, 51–63, 93–129). In the Italian parliament the issue of *professioni girovaghe* was first raised by Carlo Arrivabene in January 1868 during a more general discussion of emigration. Arrivabene described a true business in children operated by an Italian resident in England who had made a fortune by the exploitation of immigrant children.⁷ The following month the Italian Welfare Society in Paris issued a much-circulated report on the phenomenon there, while the Italian consul in New York sent a report on wandering children in that city that was published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* in June.⁸ In the space of a few months then, forces converged from three different directions to urge parliamentary consideration of the problem. Either the phenomenon exceeded a level of tolerance in all three cities in 1868 or else the concern raised in one context managed to quickly infect the others. Both processes may indeed have been triggered by the Parisian police crackdown of 1867. If so, then the French need to show the world a setting for the exposition, the capital city, free of child vagabondage, complemented by the English desire for peace and quiet, forced the new Italian state to address the same issue insofar as the ubiquitous nature of child performers and hawkers injured Italian prestige.

From the outset the wandering trades debate focused on national dignity and the negative image of Italy projected by these poor waifs. As with so many of the issues surrounding childhood at the time, the debate saw the question of Italian prestige at once in competition with and complemented by that of humanitarian concern for the suffering of children. The parliamentary debate stretched from 1868 to final passage of the law in December 1873, a relatively short period of time as compared, for example, to the 16 years it took to pass a child labor law (or the 58 it took to get foundling legislation). The leading figure in the debate was the former *garibaldino* Giuseppe Guerzoni. Starting in May 1868, Guerzoni, working from the Italian Welfare Society in Paris report, denounced to parliament the horrible fact of a true traffic in Italian children. Subsequently he would author the 1872 parliamentary report that accompanied the successful bill on wandering trades. In addition to the general issue of prestige, the parliamentary debate focused on several specific issues: the contracts between parents and procurers, the motivations of the parents who entered into these agreements, the right of the state to limit parental authority, and the sorts of activities that were to be disapproved of and so forbidden.⁹

Ironically, the Public Security Law of 1865 had prohibited wandering trades for anyone under the age of 18 unless a parent gave written consent.¹⁰ As it turned out, that measure, intended to curtail child vagabondage, instead encouraged the notorious three-year contracts according to which parents entrusted their children to the not always scrupulous agents for a modest fee.¹¹ What motivated the parents? Poverty, of course, all agreed lay at the root of the problem, but while some bourgeois commentators evoked the wretchedly poor father weighed down by a large family he was unable to feed, just as many others condemned the depravity and complete lack of moral sentiment of parents who would abandon their children to such a fate for the small sums they received.

The 1865 law had specifically recognized the right of parents to contract their children out for wandering trades; indeed that right extended to other forms of apprenticeship as well, whether in Italy or abroad. Essentially, parents (usually fathers) could transfer parental authority (*patria potestà*) over their children to, in most cases, the master of some trade or another. What the Wandering Trades Law sought to do instead was limit that authority in certain cases. Needless to say some lawmakers (the strictest liberals in the traditional sense) objected to any limitations of this sort, the same objection they would raise in response to proposed child labor laws (a debate that also got underway in Italy at just this time). Judging though from the parliamentary *relazioni* and the large majorities by which the 1873 law was passed, there existed by then a consensus on the right of the state to limit parental authority in specific cases when children's welfare was at stake.

An equally delicate issue raised by the proposed legislation regarded whether the state had the right to close off a possible source of income to poor Italians (and whether indeed it was advisable to do so given the miserable conditions of much of the population). This issue came especially to the fore in relation to the law's second (and final) version. Initially the plan had been to forbid the contracting of children under the age of 16 (or 18) for the purpose of practicing wandering trades abroad. But as one lawmaker pointed out, it was hardly reasonable for the Italian state to attempt to outlaw activities taking place outside the national borders that instead it permitted inside Italy itself. Contracts then were to be forbidden for those professions wherever they might be practiced. But just what professions were these? Some traditional wandering trades were considered honest work and therefore not to be banned for children: the selling of pots and pans, for example, or of plaster statuettes. Others instead were classified as immoral: street singing and playing, displaying animals (the classic organ grinder with monkey, for example), acrobatics, assisting in games of chance. These latter activities were perceived as verging on begging or vagabondage, though there was disagreement over some of them. Still other activities entered into the debate, in particular chimney sweeping, a traditional wandering trade for boys from Savoie in the northwest. Chimney sweeping was certainly an honest and useful activity, but it was also a dangerous one and not necessarily an ideal occupation for a ten-year-old boy. Ultimately chimney sweeping was not covered by the 1873 law, for if it had then other dangerous occupations would likely have been considered and the debate would necessarily have merged into the general one on child labor.

As finally drafted, the 1873 law forbade the entrusting of minors under the age of 18 by their parents or guardians to third parties for the purpose of wandering trades, whether in Italy or abroad. The wandering trades specifically criminalized included tumblers, jugglers, mountebanks, charlatans, ambulant singers and players, acrobats, soothsayers, interpreters of dreams, animal displayers, alms seekers, and the like.¹² Significantly, none of these were considered productive work, nor were they, like itinerant selling, perceived as helping to oil the wheels of commerce. Instead they fit into the category of parasitic and so pathological activities (a category in which pre-Freudian dream analysis was also included). Penalties included fines, prison terms, and possibly the loss of parental authority. Interesting from a legal point of view, the law specifically targeted nationals and foreigners involved in the procurement of children in Italy for wandering trades as well as Italians who received children in consignment for wandering trades abroad. Namely, the state sought to punish Italians who committed a crime (against other Italians) while both were outside the

territory of the kingdom. Legislators did not, however, presume to extend the law to non-Italians procuring/receiving Italian children abroad (nor for that matter to Italians receiving non-Italian children abroad).

Following passage of the 1873 law, complementary legislation to repress the phenomenon at the receiving end was introduced in France, New York, and Pennsylvania in 1874.¹³ In Italy instead the issue of wandering trades faded into the usual sort of complacency that attends “normal” levels of suffering. The phenomenon itself did not of course go away so easily, and the small number of convictions for violation of the 1873 law certainly had more to do with scant enforcement than the sudden decline of wandering trades. That failure to arrest and convict the child procurers is hardly surprising. All the parties involved, parents, procurers, and children, had reasons to keep the practice secret from authorities. Nor must it have been difficult to disguise migration for the pathological wandering trades as instead expatriation to engage in (economically) healthy and productive occupations. As we see below, the issue reemerged a quarter of a century later and so precisely in that period of general anxiety about children of interest to us. At that later date the continued procurement of children for wandering trades was linked to similar practices used instead to supply labor for a productive industrial activity, namely glassmaking. The moral status of the activity in question no longer raised concern, but rather the young age of the workers and the dangerous conditions in which they worked, concerns very much in keeping with those raised in the ongoing child labor debate and which contributed to Italy’s contemporary attempt to seriously regulate that labor.

Les petits italiens

Following passage of the French and American laws of 1874, Italian authorities sought unsuccessfully to achieve a similar end in the United Kingdom, an effort abandoned in 1877 (Paulucci di Calboli 1893, 154). Subsequently the problem, which had inspired so many cries of outrage in the period 1868–1873, faded from view. Tommaso Catalani’s 1878 piece in *Nuova Antologia* (Catalani 1878), which among other things explores the legal obstacles that rendered the 1873 law ineffective in England, represents something of a final Italian appeal before 25 years of relative silence. Yet there is ample evidence that the passage of the 1873 law did not succeed in suppressing the market in child labor for wandering trades abroad. Catalani’s report, for example, recounts the campaign, starting in 1877, of the English Charity Organisation Society to see that mandatory school attendance be applied to Italian as well as English children. Their efforts

seem to have disrupted the *tratta dei fanciulli* temporarily and resulted in the repatriation of about 80 children (Catalani 1878). In Italy, meanwhile, archival documents from Caserta and Frosinone reveal continuing attempts by prefects and sub-prefects in those provinces to prevent the departure of minor-age *girovaghi* in the 1870s and 1880s (Protasi 1999, 203–5). These attempts cannot have been very effective as the presence of young Italian organ grinders in London and other British cities continued unabated, generating new efforts to repress the phenomenon at the receiving end. In particular, the British Children's Protection Act of 1899 had as its principal objective the "repression of Italian child vagabondage." Addressing generally the mistreatment of children, the act specifically targeted the employment of boys (under 14) and girls (under 16) in street professions that used singing, dancing, playing, and hawking as excuses for begging (Paulucci di Calboli 1893, 131–3).

Appropriately it would be the heir to Guerzoni, the single individual who most successfully publicized the plight of young Italian emigrants in the 1890s and 1900s, who once again raised the issue for an Italian public in 1893. Raniero Paulucci di Calboli was an Italian diplomat who served in London and Paris (but also Vienna, Lisbon, Bern, and Tokyo) during a career that stretched from 1885 to 1920.¹⁴ In addition to reviving the issue of the *girovaghi*, Paulucci di Calboli would also later spark interest in both the *petits italiens* working in French glass factories and the "white slavery" of Italian girls. In 1909 he published, in French, *Tears and Smiles of Italian Emigration*, a collection of his work on various categories of emigrants from wandering musicians to shoe-shine boys to chimney sweeps.¹⁵

While in England (1885–1886, 1890–1894), Paulucci di Calboli studied the Italian migration there and in particular the *girovaghi* (of all ages) who constituted in his estimate a majority of the Italian presence in Britain. Although he noted, in 1893, a recent decline in Italian vagabondage—a prelude he hoped to its disappearance—and especially the ambulant musicians, "the worst and most useless of the species," nonetheless he testified to the persistence of the *tratta dei fanciulli* in the 1890s. Citing an English study of the year before (Wilkins 1892), Paulucci di Calboli noted in 1893 that:

Contrary to what is believed in Italy, where it is thought that thanks to the law of 1873 the foul traffic in children has almost completely disappeared, it continues to this very day, for which the author offers substantial evidence.¹⁶

Paulucci di Calboli's work on wandering trades did not go unnoticed,¹⁷ though it did not generate the sort of interest that accompanied either the wandering trades reports of the late 1860s or his own revelations of 1897–1898 regarding the *petits italiens* employed in French glass factories.

It did inspire Pietro Sitta to investigate the phenomenon, and his work on Italian workers and children in England also attests to the continued presence on British streets of Italian child musicians and ice-cream vendors, “innocent victims of vile contracts, modern slaves of a trade still more shameful than the African slave trade.”¹⁸

In her own work on this topic, Protasi identifies the early 1890s as the moment when young Italian boys from the mountainous surroundings of Sora and Isernia, two towns in the Appenines about 150–200 kilometers East of Rome, began migrating to France to work in glass factories. The factories were located in the *départements* of Rhône (outside Lyon), Loire (especially Rive-de-Gier), and Seine (outside Paris). Given the apparent contemporary decline in the migration of ambulant child musicians, one might interpret the arrival of the *petits italiens* (we explore that term below) as a sort of replacement, a new outlet for the inevitable surplus of southern Italian labor in this period of growing emigration. Protasi makes this point, but it is complicated by the fact that the sending regions are no longer those of earlier decades. The reports on wandering trades in the 1860s and 1870s nearly all identified Basilicata and the towns including and around Viggiano (province of Potenza) as the major sources of that earlier *tratta dei fanciulli*, while in 1893 Paulucci di Calboli named Caserta (in Campania) as the origin of most wandering trades migration to England. In 1897–1898 instead he lists 23 towns from which the young glassworkers came; at least 20 were from around Sora (then province of Caserta or Terra di Lavoro).¹⁹ In addition to the transition from wandering trades to glass work, the prime recruiting ground for child labor seems to have migrated from Basilicata to Campania-Molise.²⁰ Also, whereas the wandering trades had employed both girls and boys, the glass factories used exclusively boys (though on a smaller scale Italian girls were contracted for work in French textile mills).

The glass factories in the southeast of France at the time specialized in the mass but not mechanized production of inexpensive bottles (supplying in particular French wine producers). That industry had long drawn on both local labor and immigrant labor from across the border in Piedmont. Traditionally boys, often the sons of adult workers, would start working in the factories at a young age and then work their way up the labor hierarchy. That hierarchy consisted of four levels: *ouvriers*, *grands garçons*, *porteurs*, and *gamins*. The *ouvriers*, described in later reports as a class of irascible drunks, were the glass blowers and so the figure upon whom the others depended. The *grand garçon*, in some sense the apprentice to the *ouvrier*, acted as the *ouvrier's* assistant in crafting the bottle. The *porteur* instead extracted from the furnace the correct amount of molten glass on the end of the blowing tube and brought the prepared tube to the *ouvrier*. After

blowing the bottle (in a mold) and some finishing operations, the *ouvrier* put the still-hot bottle in a heavy iron *sabot* and tossed it to the *gamin* who stood about a meter and a half away. The *gamin* then carried or ran the bottle in the *sabot* about 20 meters to another furnace where it received a final firing.²¹

For a variety of reasons, perhaps including increased production due to technical innovation, the demand for child labor seems to have increased in the 1890s.²² That demand was largely a function of the low cost and subservience of the boy workers, though it was also argued that these tasks could best be accomplished by children because of their small stature and nimbleness (Heywood 1988, 113). Some of the *gamins* and *porteurs* were the children of French and immigrant (Piedmontese) parents including sons of the *ouvriers* themselves. But these parents knew first-hand how hard the glass factory work was and how it debilitated the boys who went to work there; normally they did not send a child before the age of thirteen and then only with the understanding that he follow the traditional path and eventually become a *grand garçon* or one of the relatively well-paid *ouvriers*. The number of *gamins* and *porteurs* needed by the industry, however, far exceeded both the number of *ouvriers* and *grands garçons* and also the local supply of child labor. Moreover, that supply had been reduced by the French Child Labor Law of 1892, which set the minimum age for factory work at 13. This combination of factors together with the ever more massive Italian emigration of the period meant that by the late 1890s most of the *gamins* and *porteurs* (those with no prospect of eventual promotion) were young Italians from Sora and its surroundings (2/3 to 3/4 it was estimated; in all several thousand Italian boys). Like the ambulant musicians before them, they were recruited by procurers who signed contracts with their parents and delivered them to *padroni* operating dormitories in the glass towns. The standard contract was for three years at 100 lire per year, though reportedly the second year was rarely paid as the *padrone* in France would write complaining of expenses incurred by the boy as a result of illness or some other excuse. The *padrone* received a payment from the factory owners for each worker and likely collected his wages as well.

The work of the *porteurs* was apparently the hardest as they spent their days going back and forth to furnaces that had to stay above 1500 degrees Fahrenheit and had to work with the dangerously hot molten glass; the *porteurs* were generally 13 or older. The younger children, starting as young as 9, worked as *gamins* transporting perhaps 600–1000 bottles a day.²³ They had to endure the heat of the secondary furnaces and also the ire and physical abuse (thrown shards for example) of the *ouvriers* should they fail to catch one of the thrown bottles or break it for some other reason. The glass furnaces operated continuously so work went on day and

night. Ostensibly there were three 8-hour shifts, but because of the shortage of *gamins* and *porteurs*, the *petits italiens* often had to work two consecutive shifts. In addition to having to endure hours at a time in front of the hot and noxious furnaces, the scantily clad boys frequently suffered burns on their naked arms, legs, and feet, in addition to the abuse of the *ouvriers*. According to some reports the majority of these boys suffered from tuberculosis and mortality was high.

Far from the care and protection of parents, the life of the *petits italiens* did not improve much after work; their dormitories and bedding might be filthy, and the notoriously unscrupulous *padroni* reportedly treated them poorly and underfed them. It was the *padrone* who brought the children to the factory owners. In order to circumvent the Child Labor Law he presented forged documents (passports, work booklets) or else documents belonging to older children in order to pass off the younger ones as over 13. Those documents were generally acquired by the procurer in Italy or else forged and/or reused in France. The figures of procurer and *padrone* might in fact be one and the same, or a wife might operate a dormitory while a husband traveled to Italy to enlist new recruits. With regard to the younger boys passed off as 13 or older, it seems to have been frequently, and often facetiously, remarked that the Italian workers were indeed so *petits* as compared to their French counterparts.²⁴

Paulucci di Calboli came to Paris in early 1895, two years after his work on wandering trades in England. In September 1897 (four months after the Annunziata revelations discussed in chapter 1) he published a piece in the French *Revue des Revues* that initiated a new season of concern about Italian child migration. Alerted to the fate of the glass workers by an investigation carried out in 1895 by the Italian consul in Lyon, in "La traite des petits Italiens en France" Paulucci di Calboli exposed and condemned the employment and mistreatment of underage Italians (Paulucci di Calboli 1897). If we are to believe the *Revue des Revues* editor, Paulucci di Calboli's exposé inspired "unanimous protest, in both the major and minor press of Paris and the *départments*. Rarely has a cry of social anguish had such resonance" (Paulucci di Calboli 1898, 150). Certainly the article raised an outcry in Italy where it was the object of parliamentary debate and much cited in the press; it also influenced the drafting of the 1901 Emigration Law (see below), and led to a number of investigations. Most dramatically of all, the plight of the *petits italiens* inspired a number of raids in the glass towns, carried out by a collaboration of Italian missionaries, consular officials, and French police, to free the "enslaved" children.

In a follow-up piece six months after his first effort, Paulucci di Calboli noted that while the initial outcry inspired by his article had led to some improvement in the living and working conditions of the *petits italiens*,

subsequently the situation had once again deteriorated so that now they were treated worse than ever (Paulucci di Calboli 1898, 158). In response to calls for action raised in parliament, the Italian governments (initially under Prime Minister di Rudini) moved on several fronts. The Interior Ministry alerted local authorities in the sending regions and border areas to be on the look out for these slave traders, or *negrieri* as they were infelicitously called. In particular, care was exercised in the issuance of passports and work booklets for children, and border crossings were watched for procurers shepherding groups of boys across to France.²⁵ As a result, officials did succeed in making some notable arrests. Particularly active was Raffaele Majetti, *il buon giudice*, who after years combating the *tratta dei fanciulli* in the province of Caserta (as *pretore* di Roccasecca) would transfer to Rome and play a central role in the childsaving movement there (see chapter 5). Meanwhile, Turinese authorities sent several dozen children back to their homes in the South. Just the same, added vigilance seems not to have been enough as the procurers and *padroni* forged documents and avoided border controls by getting off the trains in Italy and walking the boys over the mountains from Piedmont to France; alternatively the parents themselves might accompany the children as far as the border. Meanwhile the Foreign Ministry initiated an investigation in France, undertaken by Lionello Scelsi, its consul in Lyon. Scelsi visited many of the glass factories and found that indeed the “true market in human flesh” continued unabated in spite of revelations and efforts to date (late 1900) (Scelsi 1900).

Contemporaneously, the Emigration Assistance Organization, a recently founded missionary organization (May 1900) that came to be better known after its founder as the Opera Bonomelli, took an interest in the *petits italiens* and sent one of its members, the lawyer Ugo Cafiero, to carry out an investigation in the municipalities of Sora and Isernia. Cafiero’s investigation, which included interviews with returned glass workers, parents, officials (including Majetti) and clergy, served primarily to further document the unhappy fate of many of the child emigrants, the desperate poverty of the region, and so the frequent complicity of the parents in the procurers’ schemes. A few of his revelations did lead to arrests. In his report, Cafiero dwells at some length on the way in which this pathological emigration has ruined the health of the sending towns. Villages once populated by florid, robust peasants have been contaminated by the tuberculosis and syphilis brought back by the emigrants. Cafiero concludes—contrary to the claims of various ministers—that the government has the means and so the obligation to entirely suppress the *tratta dei fanciulli* (Cafiero 1901).

More dramatic still were the Opera Bonomelli’s actions in France. Another of its officers, the Senator Ernesto Schiaparelli, went in late

summer 1901, a few months after the Cafiero investigation, on a mission to the glass factories of Rhône and Loire. Armed with what information he could gather in Italy, including requests from parents for the repatriation of children about whom they feared the worst, Schiaparelli set about visiting both the factories and dormitories, often in tandem with a priest of the *Opera* already resident there. Ultimately he also enlisted the aid of both the Italian consul in Lyon, Enrico Perrod, and the French police. Together they carried out true raids to liberate dozens of young Italian workers, the usual justification being violation of the French law against employing children under the age of 13. In spite of threats and resistance from the *padroni* and the often successful hiding of the children, Schiaparelli ultimately repatriated about 80 children on this first trip (Schiaparelli 1901). A month or so later, in October, Schiaparelli returned with reinforcements, including a colleague from the other house of parliament. Aided again by Perrod and French authorities he managed to free another 100 boys from the “sinister merchants of human flesh.” In order to second the efforts of Schiaparelli and the Opera Bonomelli, the Commissariato Generale dell’Emigrazione (CGE), newly formed by the 1901 Emigration Law, sent its own representative to the region on a three-month mission to aid in repressing the many abuses revealed by the reports of Scelsi, Cafiero, and others. As a result, in 1902, Perrod could report that, following about 300 repatriations, conditions for the remaining 1000 or so minor-age Italians working in glass factories were much improved both with regard to the workplace and their room and board. In a later tribute to Majetti, his son would refer back to the combined efforts of Majetti, the Opera Bonomelli, and the Foreign Ministry which led to the complete suppression of trade in “little white slaves.” Eliminating exploitation and abuse did not, however, mean an end to the emigration of Italian boys for work in the glass factories. The Opera Bonomelli in fact planned to create its own *patronati* to replace the *padroni* and arrange for the placement of the child workers, as most agreed that the glass work—dangerous and unhealthy as it was—remained an important source of livelihood for hundreds of poor families in the Italian South.²⁶

Glass Work and the 1901 Emigration Law

Italy passed its first Emigration Law in 1888. That law introduced a license for emigration agents and forbade them from publicly encouraging Italians to emigrate abroad. Its norms included specific prohibitions regarding the emigration of minors for wandering trades or for prostitution. In a further attempt to prevent the exploitation of emigrants the new criminal code of 1889 established penalties for inducing citizens to

emigrate on false pretenses.²⁷ Generally speaking, though, these measures proved ineffective, and within a decade calls were already being raised for more extensive legislation. In the Italian parliament, debate over a new emigration law in fact began in June 1896, two months after the defeat at Adua and so the dashing of Italian colonial ambitions, and culminated in the law of December 1901. That debate was initiated and propelled throughout by the Republican and *garibaldino* Edoardo Pantano. Timing of the debate was no coincidence. Pantano himself claimed the disaster at Adua proved the pointlessness of trying to create artificial outlets for Italian emigration; and that emigration of course continued to surge after Adua. The eclipse of Crispian expansionism in fact allowed attention to turn more fully to the plight of the hundreds of thousands of poor Italians willing each year to risk long voyages to unfamiliar places in hopes of earning a decent living. Of continuing concern was the exploitation of these often illiterate emigrants by enrolment agents and the Italian shipping lines. Agents would scour the countryside signing up young men (but also women, children, and families) for the trip abroad, arranging passage and possibly providing contacts for employment as well as lodging at the ports of departure and arrival. In spite of the earlier legislation, they were little controlled and stories of overcharging, deception, and fraud were common. Once on board ship, the emigrants might encounter overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, poor and inadequate food, and disease. The impulse for new emigration legislation came largely from the need felt to protect emigrants from these sorts of abuses. Distress about the negative image Italy projected abroad by the export of poor, illiterate, and occasionally unclean masses of laborers also played an important role in the debate.

Pantano presented his emigration bill in December 1896 and again in July 1897, but without government support and in the face of powerful shipping interests who opposed such a law, it got nowhere. Nor did either of those essentially identical versions introduce any particular innovations relative to minor-age emigration. The issue of child emigration was initially of limited importance. Pantano's bill did forbid agents from arranging for the emigration of minors without the written consent of their parents or guardians, and under 16 year olds had to be accompanied by a trustworthy person, but this formulation accomplished little more than the 1865 Public Security Law. It would not, for example, have presented an obstacle to either the wandering trades or glassworks emigration. Then in September 1897, Paulucci di Calboli's exposé on the *petits italiens* came out and caused a stir. Two months later, the Radical deputy Ettore Socci asked the minister of foreign affairs what he intended to do about these young Italians working in the French glass factories. When his query made it to the Chamber for discussion in January, Socci, acknowledging Paulucci di Calboli, regretted that Italy's

previous legislative attempt to prevent the exploitation of child emigration, the Guerzoni Law of 1873, had never been enforced. He also linked the issue of the *petits italiens* to the larger and more general problem of child abandonment; an issue that we have seen also come to the fore in these years (see chapter 1). The ministry's representative responded that, difficult as this problem was, especially given the greediness (*avidità*) of the children's parents, the government had taken measures via its consulates and local authorities in Italy to suppress the phenomenon. In particular, he noted, the government's imminent emigration law proposal addressed the issue.²⁸

In fact, the government's law, presented by Foreign Minister Visconti-Venosta the following month, included notable innovations relative to minors as compared to Pantano's earlier version. In particular, the enrolment and transportation of children under 16 for work in dangerous or unhealthy professions were forbidden, and penalties were established for procurers, agents, *padroni*, and parents. A subsequent set of norms would establish exactly which jobs were considered dangerous and unhealthy, but clearly they would include glassworks. This measure survived more or less intact in the law as passed in 1901, except that the age was set at under 15, consistent with Italy's own Child Labor Law (see chapter 3).

Neither the Pantano nor the Visconti-Venosta version, however, made any progress before a change of government in June 1898 (and a new legislative session). The new Pelloux government (Foreign Minister Canevaro) first re-presented the Visconti-Venosta version and then collaborated with Pantano on a revised one. In his *relazione* (March 1899), Pantano evoked the recent revelations of a market in children that had pulled on the heart-strings of Italians and offended their sense of decency. He also re-introduced the categories of wandering trades and prostitution that had been addressed in the norms relative to the Emigration Law of 1888. Pantano must have decided that if unhealthy/dangerous professions were to be included in the bill, then wandering trades and prostitution should get similar treatment. Specifically, he proposed using the Emigration Law to punish the procurers (and parents) of children for both unhealthy/dangerous professions and wandering trades. The same punishment would also be meted out to those who, keeping their intentions secret, induced woman and girls (of any age) to emigrate for the purpose of prostitution. The second Pelloux government (May 1899–June 1900), however, saw Pantano's nemesis Visconti-Venosta back as foreign minister, and in November 1899, both Pantano and Visconti-Venosta again presented different versions of an emigration bill (on the same day).

The parliamentary intricacies became still more complicated, but finally under the Saracco government (June 1900–February 1901), Pantano and Luigi Luzzatti joined forces and, in July 1900, presented the version that

would finally be approved in January 1901. Apparently the conservative Luzzatti's involvement placated Visconti-Venosta (still foreign minister), and some deputies accused Pantano of selling out to shipping interests. But for our purposes the restrictions on minor-age emigration—inspired by the Paulucci di Calboli revelations, continued concern about wandering trades, and the issue of the white slave trade (of which more below)—remained intact. In order to migrate abroad for the purpose of work, children under the age of 15 needed a work booklet which included a record of the child's birth (and therefore his age); signatures (and so presumably the consent) of parent or guardian, mayor, and the child himself; and a medical certificate (art. 2). Article 3 forbade enrollment, and the like for wandering trades and dangerous/unhealthy work for that same age group; while inducing minor-age (under 21) women and girls to emigrate for the purpose of prostitution would be punished, regardless of whether or not the procurer revealed his intentions. According to the subsequent norms, dangerous and unhealthy professions included of course glass-works as well as most activities so defined by the new child labor legislation being drafted at the time.

Neither Schiaparelli's raids nor the new Emigration Law seem, however, to have prevented the exploitation of Italian boys in French bottle factories. Schiaparelli himself in 1903 described the *tratta dei fanciulli* as a hydra that continued to flourish in spite of the blows it had received (Schiaparelli 1903, 415). And already in May 1901, before the Emigration Law even went into effect, Teofilo Rossi called in parliament for a Franco-Italian accord to better control the traffic; the next month the Chamber passed an order of the day inviting the government to prevent the *tratta dei fanciulli* in the French glass factories.²⁹ In fact, the 1901 Emigration Law and norms did create a conflict with French labor legislation. To begin with, the Emigration Law was consistent with the 1902 Italian Child Labor Law which set the minimum age for factory work at 12 and for dangerous/unhealthy work at 15. The French law of 1892 instead set corresponding limits of 13 and 18. So while the new Italian regulations defined employment in glass factories as dangerous/unhealthy work and so forbidden to those under 15, French law had not similarly categorized that work and so it was permitted for 13 year olds. French authorities had already taken a significant step in aiding Schiaparelli to prevent the employment of Italian boys *under* 13 (at a time when the minimum age for factory work in Italy was still 9); had they followed the Italian example and defined glasswork as dangerous, they would have prevented 13–18 year olds from working as well and would have likely crippled the industry.

As it turned out the Italian government(s) and Foreign Ministry moved relatively quickly in this regard, signing a convention with France in April

1904 (among the signatories was of course Luzzatti, at the time Giolitti's treasury minister), only to see implementation of the measures envisioned in the convention delayed until 1912. A look at the convention itself suggests reasons for the delay. To begin with the convention referred not only to child labor but the reciprocal concessions and guarantees to be made by each of the two states to immigrant workers coming from the other. These measures were to deal with savings and money transfers, old-age and accident insurance, and child labor (women's labor was referred to as well). Provisions regarding immigrant savings were included in the convention itself, made into law that same year. A treaty on accident insurance was instead signed in 1906 and became effective in 1907. With regard to child labor instead, the convention only went so far as to stipulate that the French and Italian governments would decide on the documentary procedures to be introduced to prevent fraud and so provide French labor inspectors with the means to enforce the Republic's labor laws. Italy was to do the same for French children working in Italy. A sticking point, however, was that while France had a relatively well-developed network of labor inspectors, at the time, Italy had only a handful of inspectors and was unable to enforce its own child labor laws for Italian children.³⁰ According to the convention then, Italy agreed to implement a functioning inspection service throughout the kingdom analogous to that existing in France. Given Italy's inability to do so, the French apparently refused to go to the trouble of policing Italian child labor in France better than it was policed in Italy.³¹

The difficulty of fulfilling this aspect of the convention meant the Franco-Italian Accord for the Protection of Young Italian Workers in France and Young French Workers in Italy was signed only in June 1910. The Italian Prime Minister at the time was Luigi Luzzatti. That accord required Italian child workers in France to obtain a certificate from the Italian consulate before getting a French work booklet (required by the French Child Labor Law). The consuls were to issue the certificates only after confirming parental consent and the child's age (generally by means of an Italian work booklet). The French work booklets including the Italian consular certificates were to be kept by the employer and checked by the labor inspectors on their periodic factory visits. The reverse of course held for the French child workers in Italy (though they must have been few in number). With regard to glasswork, those occupations forbidden for children in Italy were to be forbidden for them in France as well (and vice versa). In the subsequent parliamentary debate, the reform socialist Angiolo Cabrini described Italy's labor inspectorate as nonexistent, meagerly funded, and only operative in a part (obviously the North) of the country. Rather than a piece of social legislation Cabrini described the

accord as a smokescreen (*vendita di fumo*). Nonetheless, and in spite of the 1904 requirement mentioned above, the accord was approved in both houses and became law in March 1912.³²

The White Slave Trade

In 1908 Gian Battista Capelli, director of the Turinese Emigration Committee,³³ could write that in spite of the measures taken to date, there were still three outstanding problem areas of child emigration: emigration for glass works, for ambulant professions, and for prostitution (Capelli 1908). These were of course exactly the areas targeted by the Italian Emigration Law of 1901, and it was more or less contemporaneous with that law that the forced migration of women and girls for the purpose of prostitution, the so-called white slave trade, emerged as a hot political topic in Italy and Europe generally.³⁴

Coincident with rising European migration in the second half of the nineteenth century, the existence of an international market in women for the purpose of prostitution was denounced as early as the 1860s.³⁵ The issue became sensational in the 1880s as a result of revelations that dozens of English girls and women, several of them virgins, had been sent to brothels in Belgium and then famously in W. T. Stead's 1885 exposé of child prostitution: "The Maiden Tribute to Modern Babylon."³⁶ On the continent, organizations like the Union Internationale des Amies de la Jeune Fille (founded by Josephine Butler and others in Neuchâtel in 1877 to work for the abolition of state-regulated and sanctioned prostitution) turned their attention to saving girls from white slaving, most notably by posting agents in busy train stations and setting up refuges for endangered girls.³⁷ But the real explosion of interest, in Italy and Europe generally, came in the first decade of the twentieth century. As Corbin puts it: "It was at the crossroads of all the obsessions of the period, a subject on which the most balanced minds of the era lost their bearings" (Corbin 1990, 275). It was, moreover, an accompaniment to, on the one hand, the more general anxiety generated by industrialization, massive migration, and the perceived breakdown in social order and control, and, on the other—insofar as much of the white slavery discourse focused on minors—the growing concern about endangered children in those years. In the case of Italy at least, the issue of national pride (or embarrassment) also played an important part.

White slavery is a problematic term and was used in a variety of ways. In its most restrictive sense it referred to the inducement by force or subterfuge of women and girls to migrate for the purpose of prostitution. If the girl were below a certain age—21 for example, according to article 3 of the 1901

Emigration Law—then even assisting someone who knowingly and willingly migrated for prostitution might be considered white slaving. Attempts to suppress white slaving instead almost necessarily focused on the larger population of foreign prostitutes. Given the often transient nature of that profession and the high level of European migration in the period, this was a significant population. Nor did it always make sense to restrict official concern to the crossing of national borders (we have already seen a parallel example in the earlier debate on wandering trades). If a 14 year old were kidnapped in Naples and spirited northward to a brothel (probably a rare event), did it really make any difference if the destination was Marseilles or Genova? And finally, with regard to minors, could concern about their enticement for foreign prostitution really be divorced from concern about the local sexual exploitation of lower-class girls in Italian cities (a certainly much larger if less publicized problem)? As the literature on the white slave trade suggests, all of these phenomena might come under that rubric.

It is difficult to know when concern about the white slave trade—usually known as the *tratta delle bianche*—was first expressed in Italy. An 1881 newspaper article describes discovery of a Neapolitan ring engaged in shipping girls, mostly glove workers, to Egypt; following the rescue of an unsuspecting 18 year old (taken off the ship at Messina), the procurers were arrested. Both the timing and the title of the newspaper article describing the Neapolitan case—“The Trade of White Slaves in Italy,” an unusual literal translation of the English term—suggest a special sensitivity to the contemporary revelations in Britain.³⁸ Archival sources instead—certainly incomplete—point to a somewhat later date and reveal the Italian consul at Malta in 1894 complaining about the arrival there of Sicilian prostitutes to service the British garrison. Citing the example of one 17 year old from Catania, whose passage was arranged by a notorious procurer known as *la Madama*, the consul asks in particular that passports not be issued to minor-age prostitutes.³⁹

Based on these latter sources, Mediterranean locales emerge as the almost exclusive concern of Italian authorities. Beginning at least in 1896, for example, Italian diplomats in Egypt complained about the growth over the past few years (*da vari anni*) of Italian prostitution there and asked that special care be taken to prevent the expatriation of prostitutes and pimps as well as young unaccompanied girls looking for work from the ports of Naples, Reggio Calabria, Messina, and Catania. In one case, from 1898, an Italian official in Egypt discovered and with difficulty liberated four Italian minors in a Greek-run brothel. One of these he described as having been “literally sold”; she was 13 years old and pregnant.⁴⁰

A few tragic stories of this sort—dealing with girls so young there could be little discussion of their having chosen to prostitute themselves

(judgment of the 16-year-old Maria Paretta for example would already have been different)—may have been at the origin of the campaign to suppress the white slave trade. That campaign started as a grassroots movement and first acquired an international profile when the English National Vigilance Association organized a conference held in London in June 1899. Out of that conference there emerged an International Union for the Suppression of the White Slave Trade which met again in September in Budapest; yet another non-government conference was held in Amsterdam in 1901, with Italian participation. The union's primary appeal was for an international treaty to combat the trade, an appeal that received official recognition when the French government invited other western states to send representatives to a July 1902 conference in Paris. That conference, attended by 16 states, marked, and was an expression of, a general raising of consciousness about the issue.⁴¹

In Italy, discussion of the white slave trade emerged out of the larger child emigration discourse. Following his February 1900 investigation of Sora and environs for the Opera Bonomelli (see above), for example, Cafiero noted briefly that the villages which were supplying boys to the French glass factories were also exporting girls for prostitution, and in November 1901 a Neapolitan correspondent for the Milanese newspaper *Corriere della Sera* also identified those villages as the target of a ruse to tempt away the prettiest girls, by means of marriage, for the purpose of prostitution in London.⁴² As noted in the previous section, a prostitution article had been added to the proposed Emigration Law by March 1899, and in January 1901, the month the law was passed, an Italian Committee for the Suppression of the White Slave Trade was created in Rome with Luzzatti as its president and Visconti-Venosta in an honorary position.⁴³ Among the committee's activities was the sending of a circular to Italian mayors and parish priests in May 1902 (two months before the Paris conference). The circular repeats reports coming from abroad of Italian girls caught up in the white slave trade—one of the more common tricks was to offer them work in French factories—and asks of course for help in fighting this "hateful traffic" (*turpe traffico*, the usual description) (Paulucci di Calboli 1902a, 203–4). By the time of the circular, another similar committee had been founded in Milan thanks to the efforts of Ersilia Majno and others. Destined to have a longer life than its Roman counterpart the Milanese committee oversaw founding of the Asilo Mariuccia, a rare lay organization that sought to save young girls from sexual exploitation and a life of prostitution. The fact that a White Slave Trade Committee founded an important institution of Italy's domestic "save the children" movement (see chapter 5) suggests again the ambiguous nature, or perhaps better artificiality, of the category white slaving.

In spite of these various initiatives, there seems to have been little discussion of the *tratta delle bianche* in the Italian press before Paulucci di Calboli's April 1902 article in the *Nuova Antologia* (Paulucci di Calboli 1902b). Writing from his post in Paris (where he would remain until 1906), Paulucci di Calboli described a conspiracy of silence, dictated by false modesty, that had surrounded the topic until "recent months." Reviewing what literature was available, he identified several currents of the traffic in young women. One was a current of transit following which women—from one to several thousand per year—from central Europe passed through Italy to board ships in Genova bound for South America. Italian women too were on those ships and one report described 2200 fallen Italian women who lived in a *single street* in Buenos Aires, a city described elsewhere as "the largest permanently open market in human flesh in the civilized world." Italian prostitutes from the North were also practicing their trade in significant numbers in France, Germany, and Switzerland. Paulucci di Calboli noted further that many of the girls and young women who traveled alone to these same European countries for work were easy prey to corruption. This seems to have been especially the case in Switzerland where Italian girls had poor reputations. According to Schiaparelli (who had carried out the Bonomelli-sponsored liberations of young Italian glassworkers described above), 20 out of the 100 girls who had gone to Vevey the previous year to work in a tobacco factory had returned home pregnant. (These latter observations expand the notion of white slave trade still further, namely to include young women and girls who migrate abroad for "honest" work only to fall prey to seduction or corruption.) Consistent with the police records reviewed above, however, Paulucci di Calboli identified the southern Italian traffic to North Africa (often via Malta) as the most significant of all. In spite of crackdowns in Cairo in 1894 and 1898 that included arrests, expulsions, convictions, and the closing of brothels, that traffic seems to have continued.⁴⁴

Paulucci di Calboli's article was written in anticipation of the July 1902 Paris conference at which he was Italy's official representative. From a subsequent piece of his that appeared a few months after the conference one gets the impression that white slaving had by then emerged from its conspiracy of silence and moved near the top of the public agenda. In the later piece Paulucci di Calboli refers to "hundreds" of articles that have appeared on the topic, and notes that the entire political spectrum, from Catholics (Christian Democrats and conservatives alike) to Socialists to Monarchists, had mobilized against the horrors of the trade. In addition to the activities of the Rome and Milan committees, the CGE had alerted its agents to pay special attention to female migration. An Italian chapter of the Union Internationale de l'Amie de la Jeune Fille—the Italian National Committee

dated from 1896—had placed agents in the train stations of Milan, Turin, and Genova to assist and protect young women and girls traveling on their own (Paulucci di Calboli 1902a).

As to the Paris conference, Paulucci di Calboli described it as a “triumph for feminism” aimed at achieving “a high moral end, human solidarity in favor of women!” (Paulucci di Calboli 1902a, 206). The attending delegates confirmed that the trade did indeed exist and agreed on the need for an international treaty. They sought to define the phenomenon: an enticement to emigrate for the purpose of prostitution with or without the victim’s knowledge of that ultimate purpose. Enticement of that sort should be punished in all cases where the victim is a minor and for adult women in the case of deception or use of force or threats. The delegates also explored the issues of extradition, repatriation, exchange of information, and the maintenance of files on foreign prostitutes (Paulucci di Calboli 1902a). The work of the conference then found formal expression in an International Accord signed by Italy, France, and ten other countries in May 1904.⁴⁵

In the Italian parliament, it was again Ettore Socci—the same deputy who had raised the issue of the *petits italiens* following Paulucci di Calboli’s article in 1897—who asked what the government intended to do following the 1902 Paris conference. According to Socci:

the white slave trade invades our cities, perhaps in a still more revolting and miserable form than one finds abroad; and it takes place under our very eyes . . . One need only have the courage to explore the dark slums and remote alleys late at night to witness how that vice bubbles up out of the sewers and gutters of the streets; instead of being stomped out, one might almost say it is protected.⁴⁶

Socci’s comments in fact expand the meaning of white slaving still further to include the general area of the sexual exploitation of minor-age lower-class girls. In response, the Foreign Ministry representative expressed solidarity with the republican parliamentarian but pointed out some of the difficulties inherent in combating the white slave trade.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, Italy did sign the 1904 Accord and about a year later that accord was ratified by the Italian government.⁴⁸

It is impossible of course to know the real extent of the white slave trade, however defined, and so difficult to evaluate the correspondence between the phenomenon and the outcry it inspired. For the 1880s Walkowitz finds slim evidence for the sort of involuntary prostitution described in Stead’s exposé (Walkowitz 1980, 247), while Corbin concludes “that the virgin abducted against her will or the woman raped and transported either by force or by deception to a far off brothel was a rare exception.”⁴⁹ By contrast, Paulucci di Calboli, while not a sensationalist

journalist like Stead (though perhaps one of those balanced minds that lost its bearings described by Corbin), nonetheless argues in late 1902 that further investigations have only confirmed his earlier revelations and added still more. The story, for example, of a 14-year-old girl from Turin entrusted by her father (following receipt of 40 francs) to an individual who promised to take her abroad for work as an artist's model. Two years later she escaped from a brothel in Brussels—the last of a series through which she had been passed in France and Belgium—and went to the Italian consul who arranged for her repatriation to Italy (Paulucci di Calboli 1902a). It does not take too many stories like this one to inflame public opinion, especially when fanned by “hundreds of articles”—some judged by Paulucci di Calboli to exaggerate the phenomenon—in the space of a few months. Meanwhile Italian consuls in Egypt, Tunisia, Tripoli, Malta, and Crete continued to complain about the arrival of Italian prostitutes and pimps in those locations. A significant number of the girls seem to have been under 21 and some much younger. Their arrival was often organized by procurers in the *mezzogiorno* who might work together with the pimps or madames in the destination countries.⁵⁰

It is likely that the forced abduction of young girls for prostitution was rare. Less rare certainly was the misrepresentation by emigration agents of employment opportunities for young girls, a number of whom ended up prostituting themselves for reasons ranging from threats to misery. Nor can the precarious work situations in which unaccompanied emigrant girls often found themselves have offered much protection against the compulsion, need, or temptation to resort to (succumb to) a “life of infamy.” Other girls and women instead emigrated with the specific intention of working as prostitutes. Then (as now) social, economic, and cultural forces (and choice) guided some women and girls to prostitute themselves, a step likely often encouraged by seduction, rape, or procurement. At the turn of the century, the sexual exploitation of women and girls was surely a larger issue than is suggested by an exaggerated focus on the white slave trade, a fact recognized for example by Ettore Socci. Nonetheless, the evident helplessness of cases like the 13 year old impregnated in Egypt or the 16 year-old, probably syphilitic, rescued in Brussels after two years confined to a series of foreign brothels, inspired legitimate outrage, while deflecting attention away from questions like just why did Maria Paretta run away from Naples and go to Marseilles?

Clandestine Emigration

By 1905 Italy had a law that sought to control the emigration of children for dangerous occupations, wandering trades, and prostitution; had signed

an international accord to suppress the white slave trade; and had entered into an agreement with France to prevent the reciprocal violation of child labor laws in the two countries. Yet, as is so often the case with social forces like emigration, these legislative "solutions" were more significant as indices of the nature and perception of the phenomenon than as tools of repression. Indeed there were plenty of signs that the problem areas of child migration continued to flourish into the twentieth century.

In some sense the 1901 law created a new category, the clandestine or illegal emigrant. For although the law opens, like that of 1888, with the usual formula upholding the freedom of emigration, *l'emigrazione è libera . . .*, nonetheless it also introduced new mechanisms for the repression of emigration deemed undesirable. For the purpose of transoceanic emigration, major focus of the 1901 law, that repression was exercised primarily by means of passports, and 1901 also saw introduction of a new Passport Law.⁵¹ Although a large number of emigrants still traveled without passports at that date, receiving states (most importantly the United States) had begun to tighten immigration controls, and more and more migrants without proper documents were being denied entry, creating occasionally dramatic situations. Imagine the poor immigrant family, or worse yet mother and children come to join an already immigrated father, turned back at Ellis Island after having invested their meager resources in the crossing.

The passport and emigration laws were meant first of all to facilitate emigration and protect emigrants from exploitation and abuse; at the same time they introduced important measures of social control. To begin with, passports were to be issued speedily (within 24 hours) and free of charge, and emigrants were now required to obtain a passport before embarking for (non-Mediterranean) overseas destinations. The attempt to regulate overseas migration after 1901, however, went considerably further. The Emigration *Commissariato* (CGE), for example, sought to channel all of that migration on to CGE-licensed ships leaving from the CGE-inspected ports of Genova, Naples, or Palermo (and later also Messina), while suppressing/prohibiting Italian departures from other European ports. These measures were meant to insure enforcement of the 1901 law by maintaining CGE oversight of all Italian emigration (the law included regulations on fares, crowding on ships, minimum speeds, adequate board, and so on). Non-GGE emigration from European ports of course continued just the same, and ten years after introduction of the Emigration Law, police records reveal currents of non-documented emigrants, aided by non-authorized agents, heading to Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil via Switzerland or else Sardinia/France on their way to Atlantic ports, and at a time when the CGE was seeking to limit that very migration. Various groups apprehended

included children, and some of those children were of course migrating without parents (or passports).⁵²

In conjunction with the general passport requirement, the CGE exercised control by the denial of passports for specific individuals, groups, or locations; restrictions were naturally stricter for minors than adults. The extent of parental authority at the time meant that minor-age children could not emigrate (obtain a passport) without consent of the head of household (nor for that matter could wives). Nor were under 16 year olds to receive passports, regardless of parental consent or protest, when there was suspicion of emigration for “immoral” purposes or for dangerous/unhealthy work. On the other hand, passports were not to be issued to fathers or husbands leaving their families unprovided for (though many of course emigrated specifically in order to send money back to families left in Italy so likely this measure was little enforced). And from 1902, passports were also to be denied to individuals likely to be turned away by the receiving country. Discretion was left to the prefects (with guidance from the CGE) but that category did come to include children under 16 migrating to the US without a parent (and under 18 for Canada).⁵³

The 1901 Emigration Law had given prominence of place to the emigration of children for the more parasitic wandering trades, for prostitution and for dangerous and unhealthy work. These were, in fact, the very first categories addressed by Italy’s most important piece of emigration legislation (articles 2, 3, and 4 out of a total of 38) following an article on the emigration of military and military-age men. That prominent place suggests the symbolic importance child emigration had assumed by 1901. The child emigration articles of the 1901 law, however, did not specifically criminalize the emigration of children for the purposes listed. Instead they sought to penalize the adults who encouraged and arranged that emigration. Maria Paretta, for example, was presumably not committing a crime by traveling to France to prostitute herself, except insofar as she was violating the parental authority to which she was still subject at 16 (similarly, a married woman was forbidden to do likewise if against her husband’s wishes). Nonetheless, those articles were part of a larger law which did introduce a new concept of emigration control (and so inevitably the violation of that control).

Whereas the passport requirement and much else of the 1901 Emigration Law applied specifically to transoceanic emigration, the articles on child migration—inspired as they were by issues that were largely European or Mediterranean—applied to emigration in general.⁵⁴ And they too, like the passport requirement, introduced a new bureaucratic category of clandestine emigration. For the stipulation that 9–15 year olds emigrating for work first obtain a work booklet (and so birth certificate,

medical exam, and parental consent) meant that to migrate without the booklet was itself clandestine migration. Again, it was the agents, procurers, or parents who were to be punished for these violations.

In addition to police efforts in Italy to prevent the departure of undocumented child emigrants, the Foreign Ministry repeatedly urged its ambassadors and consuls to monitor Italian child labor abroad and its possible abuse.⁵⁵ Not surprisingly, special efforts continued to focus on the glass factories around Lyon. In 1905, for example, the consul there compiled a list of the Italian boys employed in the major glass center of Rive-de-Gier together with their birth dates as recorded on work documents. That information was then sent, by way of the Interior Ministry, to the prefects of the boys' home provinces (mostly Caserta and Campobasso) for verification. The effort, stretched out over the next couple of years, did yield a handful of falsifications, though it was of course less effective in detecting cases where boys presented documents that really belonged to elder siblings or compatriots. Nonetheless, in summer 1909 the CGE deemed the glassworks emigration problem still grave enough to merit sending a special emissary, Edoardo Altavilla, to carry out a three-month investigation in Sora (Caserta). Altavilla found, alas, many of the same practices denounced over a decade before by Paulucci di Calboli. The Altavilla investigation corresponded with renewed activity on the Franco-Italian Accord on young workers discussed earlier.

The next few years also saw similar investigations carried out by the Women's Secretariat for the Protection of Emigrating Women and Children in both southern France (1911) and Sora (1913) as well as a parliamentary initiative in France (1912). The Women's Secretariat had emerged out of the First Italian Women's Congress of 1908. In a context of ever more massive emigration, neither the young women's protection societies (like the *Union Internationale des Amies de la Jeune Fille*) nor the emigrant aid organizations (like the *Opera Bonomelli*) specifically addressed the problem of migrating women and children. Headquartered in Rome, the Women's Secretariat, in addition to the investigations mentioned here, created "homes" near factories in Europe where Italian women and children went to work and maintained offices in the Milan and Florence train stations (Danieli-Camozzi 1914; 1916).

The impression one gets from the reports referred to above is that little had changed. Children as young as ten or twelve were working long hours under brutal conditions in the glass factories. Many of them, however, now came from Spain, and the Italians—probably to circumvent the Franco-Italian Accord—were themselves often passed off as Spaniards. Police archives too reveal continued repatriations of underage Italian glassworkers from France as well as investigations and prosecutions of procurers until at

least 1913. It is likely these abuses ceased only when Italian workers stopped migrating to the glass factories altogether.⁵⁶

France and glass factories, although easily the most publicized, were not of course the only destinations for Italian child labor. The MAIC child labor study of 1880 (see chapter 3), for example, already revealed currents of young workers leaving the Italian northeast for employment in the building trades and brick factories of Austria-Hungary. And as early as 1899, the Italian government had signed an accord with Bavaria to prevent the employment of underage workers in brick factories there (similar to that negotiated with France in the years 1904–1910). This migration too, however, resisted efforts aimed at suppression, and in 1910 the energetic prefect of Udine reported that during the past emigration season (February–March) police had stopped over 700 clandestine child emigrants attempting to cross the border from his province into nearby Slovenia and Croatia.⁵⁷ The classic child emigrant remained the Savoie chimney sweep though interestingly he does not figure in any of the official and journalistic sources reviewed here.

In 1907, the Italian parliament returned to the question of child emigration. Already by that time some of the shortcomings of the 1901 legislation had become apparent, including the lack of passport regulations for European countries—some, like Switzerland, now required them—and inadequate measures relative to the clandestine emigration of minors. In response, the Foreign Ministry proposed a series of modifications to the 1901 law which included the instructions that a new set of emigration norms specifically address the issue of minor-age labor emigration. Following a change of legislature, these modifications were only approved in mid-1910.⁵⁸ The envisioned norms, however, were not forthcoming. Instead, given the apparent urgency of the problem, the Luzzatti government issued a ministerial decree according to which children under the age of 12 were not allowed to emigrate (i.e., not issued passport and work booklet) unless accompanied by their parent or guardian, or else, accompanied by a trustworthy person, were going to join that parent or guardian. Boys aged 12–15 and girls aged 12–18 might instead also travel with older siblings or else to join those siblings or grandparents. Those same age groups might emigrate independently if they already had a work contract approved by the Italian consul at the destination, were deemed by a physician physically capable of performing the work in question, and were entrusted during the voyage to a trustworthy person.⁵⁹

The new decree of course expanded the category of clandestine emigration still further. In 1913, for example, Sante Basso, a former treasury guard (*guardia di finanza*) and resident of Piazzola del Brenta (North of Padua), was arrested for organizing the emigration of workers, mostly

young girls and women, for employment at a textile mill in Landsberg (Bavaria). This work was not classified as dangerous, itinerant, or immoral; nor were the unaccompanied minors traveling overseas. Nonetheless, Basso's activities were deemed exploitative—the contract signed by the girls' parents promised the former's "blind obedience"—and the migration illicit or clandestine.⁶⁰

As reviewed earlier, young Italian boys continued to migrate for work in the French glass factories in spite of the various laws and decrees that sought to combat the practice. Similarly, thousands of boys were still migrating to German-speaking lands for construction and brick manufacture in the years leading up to World War I. Girls, meanwhile, were also migrating to European destinations, especially to work in textile mills (like the one in Landsberg). This latter migration, however, with the occasional exception like that organized by Sante Basso, seems not to have inspired concern so much for the nature of the work performed but more often for the moral dangers faced by girls on their own.

Anxiety about the white slave trade, however understood, had in fact waned following a peak centered on the 1902 Paris conference and subsequent international accord. In Italy, while the Milan committee continued its activities and even expanded its refugee services for girls in need, a 1904 meeting of White Slave Trade committees in Rome seems to have been a failure, and the host committee itself disbanded shortly afterward.⁶¹ In feminist circles the issue was kept alive as part of the more general concern to offer protection for unaccompanied girls and women (see chapter 5). Yet in 1908, at the First Italian Women's Conference, Berta Turin, president of the Italian National Committee of the Union Internationale des Amies de la Jeune Fille, would lament the general public apathy that had greeted women's efforts to combat the white slave trade (Turin 1912).

On both the European and Italian scene, however, the issue reemerged forcefully in 1910. The initiative came again from Paris where the Second International Congress for the Suppression of the White Slave Trade was held in that year. Subsequent congresses followed in 1912 (Brussels) and 1913 (London).⁶² The 1910 conference did lead to yet another international agreement, the International Convention of May 4, 1910, to which Italy was a signatory. Following that conference, the Italian government (under the auspices of Giolitti and Luzzatti) relaunched its own campaign against the white slave trade, and especially sought to combat the prostitution of minors. Prefects and police officials were encouraged to cooperate with private organizations (like Berta Turin's), and employment agencies, rooming houses, hotels, and train stations were identified as *loci* requiring special vigilance.⁶³ In addition, by 1913 the Director General of Public Security (essentially the national head of police) had assigned several

officials under his direct command to a white slavery detail while each prefect was in turn to appoint a high ranking officer to deal with the problem on a local level. One reason for the added manpower was a stipulation in the 1910 Convention that each state monitor foreign prostitutes and provide for repatriation in cases of white slaving (as defined by the Committee). To this end the Italian Interior Ministry drew up a questionnaire, in March 1913, that police officers were to pose to non-Italian prostitutes (presumably registered prostitutes and clandestine prostitutes stopped for whatever reason). Subsequently the ministry gathered hundreds of files, and the Undersecretary of State for the Interior Alfredo Falcioni announced, based on the questionnaires as well as consular reports, the existence of a true market in young country girls lured to the cities for immoral purposes. Indeed he thought the evil more widespread than suggested by the few cases brought to light.

Undoubtedly the sexual exploitation of young girls *was* greater than generally perceived. On the other hand, a glance at the files on foreign prostitutes reveals that the vast majority of these women were over 21 and in Italy by choice. The white slave trade, understood in the classic sense, was likely exaggerated.⁶⁴ One can in fact make the case that while the general anxiety about white slaving in the period 1899–1913 did not emerge in response to a well-organized and widespread market in women, it did nonetheless serve to placate a growing sense among bourgeois men of discomfort over the question of sex with girls, by substituting a righteous and high-minded crusade.

Legislative remedies and international accords then did not resolve the problems of child emigration. Indeed in the years leading up to the Great War (and so the interruption of mass emigration) one can still find references to wandering child organ grinders on the streets of Birmingham, half a century after British measures and the Italian Guerzoni Law sought to eliminate the phenomenon.⁶⁵

* * *

The discussion of foundling care in chapter 1 took us back to the late Middle Ages, while Italian concern about child migration dates instead from not long after unification. For our purposes, though, comparison of the two issues reveals a remarkable chronological coincidence. The Annunziata scandal of May 1897 initiated a decade of concern about foundling care and, ultimately unheeded, calls for reform. That same year saw Paulucci di Calboli's revelations regarding the fate of young Italian glass workers in French factories, followed in subsequent years by investigations, raids, and legislative attempts to better protect Italy's emigrating

child workers. Those attempts included important measures in Italy's 1901 Emigration Law. The 1890s also saw international attention focus on the so-called white slave trade, attention that probably peaked with the 1902 Paris conference and, for Italy, another exposé by Paulucci di Calboli. The chronological outline that emerges from these first two chapters is one that will find confirmation in those that follow, and the period stretching from the 1890s to World War I emerges as a crucial one regarding the sensibility of public opinion to the plight of marginalized youth.

An explanatory framework for that sensibility has already been explored in the introduction. For the specific topic of emigration it is no surprise that a peak in concern about child migration should coincide with the period when general Italian emigration assumed massive proportions. And the departure of Italian children to work abroad raised issues similar to those surrounding the more general phenomenon of emigration: Italy's international image, Italian backwardness, the southern problem, Italian jurisdiction outside the kingdom. But child emigration also had a set of its own issues, and those issues cross over to a number of other topics discussed in this book. Did, for example, the contracting out of children to do dangerous work in foreign factories represent a difficult choice made by destitute parents or was it instead proof of the depravity of unfeeling ones? The figure of the heartless parent (especially the heartless mother) occupied an important space in the Italian consciousness at this time, especially with regard to the "morally and materially abandoned" youth left to wander Italy's urban streets (see chapter 5). The sense that society somehow had to correct this situation—aid the young victims of misery or function as a substitute for the inadequate parent—characterized the age of child anxiety identified here.

In another example, the figure of the girl emigrant might inspire distress about the hard work and long hours she had to endure in foreign factories and so find a parallel in the domestic child labor debate (see chapter 3). More likely, however, concern about unaccompanied young Italian girls going abroad found its origin in worry over the sexual dangers she faced. In this regard, the image of girls alone abroad bore a close resemblance to the girl alone in the city (chapter 5 again). In each of these examples, the forces of modernity—industrialization, urbanization, mass migration—seemed to place ever greater numbers of children in precarious situations, whether from a moral or hygienic point of view, and so created a need for social intervention to guard Italian youth. At this point the comparison with chapter 1 becomes one of contrast. The foundling issue was a premodern one and in decline by the late nineteenth century. It was still, however, widespread enough to both come into conflict with the concept of united

Italy as a modern civilized state and contribute to a more general climate of child anxiety. Significant levels of child migration instead, like the problems of child labor, juvenile delinquency, and street children explored below, were all themselves among the unfortunate indices of modernization and so threatened to spiral out of control if society and the state did not intervene.

Working Children

United Italy passed its first Child Labor Law in 1886. According to that law, children under the age of 9 could not work in industrial factories, quarries, or mines (see table 3.1). In addition, those under 10 could not work below ground, and those under 15 were banned from dangerous or unhealthy occupations. A maximum workday of 8 hours was established for children between the ages of 9 and 12.¹ A second law, which covered both women and children, came in 1902. The minimum working age was raised to 12, and the building trade was added to those covered. Work below ground was allowed only for males over 13 and was prohibited for women and girls of any age. In order for a child between 12 and 15 to work, he or she had to have attended the required 3 years of elementary school. Boys under 15 and women and girls under 21 were required to have a medical certificate stating they were healthy and able to work. Dangerous and unhealthy occupations were still barred to boys under 15 and also to women and girls under 21. Boys under 15 and women were not to work night shifts. The maximum workday was set at 11 hours for 12–15 year olds and 12 hours for women over 15. Specifically with regard to women, enforced leave was introduced for between 3 weeks and 1 month following childbirth.² The 1902 law turned out to be unenforceable and was modified in 1907 to better accommodate the demands of industrialists and also several classes of workers.

Needless to say, this brief sketch hides a complex interplay of economic, political, and social interests. In contrast to the relatively small number of children engaged in the wandering trades and French glassworks discussed in the previous chapter, child labor legislation affected tens of thousands of young Italians. Moreover, while those who profited from the meager earnings of Italy's mendicant child musicians and young emigrant workers were few and of negligible political consequence, child labor instead was a crucial issue for several important economic interests. It was, in fact, partly

Table 3.1 Italian Child Labor Laws

	1886	1902
Categories	Factories, quarries, mines	Factories, quarries, mines, and building trades
Minimum age	9	12
Underground work		
Males	Min. age 10	Min. age 13
Females	Min. age 10	Forbidden
Night work		
Males	—	Min. age 15
Females	—	Forbidden
Dangerous/unhealthy work		
Males	Min. age 15	Min. age 15
Females	Min. age 15	Min. age 21
Enforced pregnancy leave	—	3–4 weeks following birth
Maximum workdays		
Ages 9–12	8 hours	
12–15		11 hours
Females over 15		12 hours
School requirement	None	Grades 1–3

because of the opposition of certain industrialists that the first Child Labor Law was passed only after 16 years of parliamentary debate; and that law was but a pale reflection of the one for which reformers had long hoped.

Italy was a relative latecomer to child labor legislation, as Italian legislators frequently pointed out. England passed the first effective Factory Act, setting a minimum age of 9 (subsequently lowered to 8) for textile mills (silk excepted) and maximum workday of 12 hours for 9–12 year olds, in 1833. In 1874 the minimum age was raised to 10 (where it still stood when Italy passed its first law in 1886). The French instead passed the first Child Labor Law (usually deemed of limited effectiveness) in 1841; it set a minimum age of 8 for workers in factories and workshops. A second law, enforced by paid inspectors, came in 1874 and established maximum workdays of six hours for 10–11 year olds (the lowest allowable ages) and twelve for 12–16 year olds. In 1892 the minimum age was raised to 13, six years after Italy passed its law with the 9 year old minimum age. Prussia passed a relatively strict Child Labor Law in 1853.³

Aside from chronology the Italian story fits fairly well with the pattern of other European nations. Anxiety about child labor coincided with the development of textile factories and the employment of children there.

There was virtually no child labor debate prior to the introduction of water and steam-powered machinery. In Italy mining probably played a somewhat larger role in discussions than elsewhere. An initial reluctance on the part of the state to intervene in the areas of labor and production subsequently gave way to a growing humanitarian rhetoric about the suffering and exploitation of working children. As other historians have suggested in other national contexts, that rhetoric may have disguised other motives including: the desire of more modern (for example steam-powered) firms to eliminate their more child-dependent (for example water-powered) competition; a conspiracy to abort the reform movement by the sop of ineffective legislation; and the interests of adult male laborers to protect wages and employment. The initial humanitarian line was subsequently supplemented by fears that overburdening youths with labor was contributing to national/racial decline and compromising military preparedness. Fears of "denatality" in France, however, and imperial decline in England did not find much parallel in Liberal Italy.

In Italy, as elsewhere, legislation seems to have arrived when child factory labor was already in decline and changes in the labor market had decreased opposition to those laws. Nardinelli argues that dependence on child labor was already in decline in England in 1833, and Heywood makes the same point for France at the time of the first 1841 legislation. In Italy the first and not very effective law was passed in 1886. Compliance with that first law seems to have been fairly good by 1902 when a stricter and more disruptive law was passed. As already mentioned, the latter proved unenforceable.

The Italian law of 1886 then is striking for its relatively late introduction and also for the relatively low minimum working age and long hours tolerated; there was, for example, no limit to how many hours per day a 13 year old might work. As in other national contexts, the law left out important areas of child labor altogether. Italy was of course still a predominantly agricultural country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and yet nowhere in any of the laws examined here is agricultural work explicitly addressed, work which occupied the vast majority of laboring children in Italy and from a tender age. There was nothing unusual in this. All Western child labor legislation first addressed the issue of factory labor, which was perceived as particularly harmful to children (as well as adults). In Italy children working in agriculture raised little concern until about the turn of the century. Prior to that time, one encountered instead statements like the following from 1892: "It is not only my opinion, but that of almost all the many authors who have written on the topic, that machines are the cause of child labor" (Brizzi 1893, 63). Children working

on farms did not even fit into the conceptual category of child labor; children had always worked in agriculture and neither long hours nor dangerous and unhealthy occupations there raised concern. Machines and factories instead were new and menacing in the nineteenth century; and they drew workers, including women and children, away from their traditional agricultural pursuits, potentially upsetting social and economic hierarchies. Hence machines were the *cause* of child labor and therefore made legislation necessary.

Beating-Machine Girls

Predictably, the Italian debate about child labor began well before any legislation was passed. By at least the 1840s attention already focused on a group that would continue to garner interest throughout the Liberal period: the girls who worked in the pre-Alpine and Apennine textile mills, especially silk factories. The center of Italian silk making has always been the Lombard town of Como, north of Milan. Silk and other textiles, most importantly cotton and wool, were also produced in other Lombard towns, Milan and Bergamo for example, as well as centers in Piedmont (Turin, Biella) and Venetia (Belluno, Schio). In fact, many of the textile factories were located not in the towns themselves but in the surrounding countryside where streams could power the mills (and later generate electricity) and where there was an abundant supply of cheap and mostly female labor. In Como itself silk production seems to date back to the early sixteenth century, though as an industry it did not really take off until the eighteenth century. The early nineteenth century saw rapid growth as raw silk production in Lombardy-Venetia grew from just under 3 million pounds in 1815 to nearly 5 million pounds in 1841. It was also in that period that more and more of the tasks related to silk making came to be mechanized and centralized in factories, a development that raised special concerns (Cento Bull 1989; Severin 1960).

In 1841–1842, in fact, social reformers in both Piedmont and Austrian Lombardy penned what are probably the first important discussions of child labor in Italy. Giuseppe Sacchi, a Milanese pedagogue who pioneered the introduction of nursery schools in his native city, and Carlo Ilarione Petitti di Roreto, a Piedmontese count and social reformer, both identified the employment of children in textile factories as a new phenomenon in Italy and one associated with the introduction of machines. Both of their works are valuable sources and give us some idea of the scale of child industrial labor at the time. For Piedmont, Petitti di Roreto found that the silk, cotton, and wool industries (apparently the extent of “manufacturing”

at the time) employed about 37,000 workers of whom about 7,000 (or 19 percent) were under 15. About 4,000 or a little over half of those children were girls, though more than twice as many girls as boys worked in the silk factories (Petitti di Roreto excludes both production in the home and the seasonal work associated with silk cocoon harvesting). According to the 1838 census, the population of the Savoy Kingdom stood at about 3.5 million, so Petitti di Roreto's manufacturing class accounted for a mere one percent of the population.⁴ Sacchi's study of Lombardy, certainly the most industrialized region of the peninsula at the time, revealed instead that out of a population of 2.5 million, 800,000 were employed in industry (*including* domestic industry). Sacchi's calculations relative to children are a bit more complicated and begin with the number of children *not* in school, but from them we can derive that about 54,000 girls aged 6–12 (about 30 percent of the age group) were engaged in manual industrial labor (domestic and factory); 20,000 boys instead worked over 12 hours a day in workshops and factories. About half of these two groups combined, 37,800 boys and girls, worked in the large Lombard factories (all figures for under 12). In all, it appears that about 20 percent of 6–12 year olds worked in industry, of which the silk industry was the most important.⁵ In one of the leading silk centers, Lecco (near Como), it seems that virtually all the children were employed in the silk manufacture: a reported 2296 children out of a total population of 9,133.⁶

In the work of silk filature Sacchi found girls as young as 5 working while Petitti di Roreto's more restricted sample found most children beginning work at 8 or 9 and some as young as 7. Both found workdays of 12 to 15 hours. In reference to Lecco, Sacchi wrote: "Here industrialization, pushed to its most terrible consequences, has begun in its factories and workshops to devour the flower of its population and the flower of its life" (Sacchi 1842, 249). Petitti di Roreto, while recognizing the need for child labor, similarly bemoaned the fact that children of such tender ages were being forced to work such long hours. He blamed the situation on the greed of the industrialists seeking cheap labor and on parents only too willing to be freed of the need to look after children and, at one and the same time, increase the family income. This sort of abuse would, he claimed, lead to physical deterioration, disease, and the production of adults so debilitated they would be unfit for military service and unable to earn a living. Both called on their respective states to impose minimum age limits and maximum workdays. Austria had in fact been a leader in child labor legislation, seeking to limit the hours children worked (starting in 1786) and extending obligatory schooling—often a linked issue—till age 12 in "lower Austria" (Lombardy-Venetia) in 1818. An 1843 regulation, perhaps in response to Sacchi's study, set a minimum working age of 9, providing the child had

completed 2 years of school; for factories the age was set at 14. Maximum workdays were also introduced: 10 hours for those under 12 and 12 hours for those aged 12–14. There is little, however, to indicate that these measures were successfully enforced (Sacchi 1842, 250–2; Severin 1960, 122). Nor did they survive the annexation of Lombardy and Venetia to the Italian kingdom (in 1859 and 1866 respectively).

There are a number of reasons normally cited to explain why girls and women dominated the silk and other textile industries. These include the fact that women were paid considerably less than men, and children still less; and that the small, dexterous and uncalled hands of women and girls (providing they did not also engage in agricultural labor) were particularly well suited to the tasks involved. A review of silk manufacture reveals the age hierarchy of the tasks involved and the place of the oft-cited beating-machine girls (*scopinatrici*) in the process. Silk is made from the cocoons of silk worms. If the worms are allowed to mature into moths, they burst their cocoon and so ruin the silk thread which is continuous and averages 600–900 meters in length. At just the right moment, then, all but those pupa needed for reproduction are killed, traditionally by subjecting them to steam or dry heat. This step along with the subsequent selection and sorting of the cocoons might or might not take place in the silk factory. It was generally accomplished by older women, no longer fit for reeling but with a trained eye, aided by possibly very young children. Petitti di Roreto may not have found any five and six-year-olds because he intentionally ignored this step which only lasted as long as the silk harvest, two to three months per year.

The next and first authentically industrial phase of silk manufacture took place in the reeling establishment. There young girls with some experience—but almost certainly under 15, occasionally considerably younger—tended the beating machines. In a basin, water was kept hot but below boiling, and in it the cocoons were stirred by mechanized brushes till the outer husk came loose. The girls assigned to these beating machines were responsible for maintaining the correct water level and temperature (by means of burners) and for extracting the cocoons at the right moment. Once she had removed the husk, the beating-machine girl found the end of the thread and handed the cocoon to a reeler who sat opposite the beating machine. The reeler, keeping the cocoon softened in the hot water, would then reel several threads together, adding a new one each time another ended, to produce raw silk. The reelers were older, but generally aged 15–21 and unmarried. Each of the beating-machine girls might tend 2–3 machines and so supply 2–3 reelers. One of the silk industry's major objections to child labor legislation was that if the hours of the beating-machine girls were limited, then so too must be those of the reelers, causing

serious economic difficulties for the industry. The silk beating-machine girl worked on her feet over a smelly, steamy vat of macerating cocoons and was constantly in motion. She, more than anyone else, symbolized the young overworked textile laborer. Other girls, normally younger still, apprenticed to the beating-machine girls. They worked alongside them receiving the cocoon husks and preparing them for subsequent carding by older workers. Husks and other waste products were used to produce an inferior quality of silk. These girls would eventually graduate to the beating machines just as the beating-machine girls would then become reelers.

The largest number of very young girls worked on the intermediate phase between reeling and twisting or throwing, in particular in the winding of the reeled silk onto bobbins. Subsequently, in the throwing phase (the only one consistently dominated by men), a number of silk threads on these bobbins were twisted together by a machine. Should a thread break during these phases, the machine stopped and a child quickly knotted up the broken thread. In the final weaving process, girls were generally not involved, though women did over time come to replace men at this task.⁷ In the second half of the nineteenth century, silk manufacture was Italy's most important single industry. For 1876, statistics revealed that 200,000 of Italy's 382,000 industrial workers were employed in the silk industry and 1/4 of those in Como. Between 20 and 30 percent of the silk workers were girls under 12.⁸

Carusi

Alongside the beating-machine girl stood the figure of the Sicilian *carusu*, though his fate only evoked general concern beginning in about the 1870s. His work generally involved no machines, but it was certainly an accompaniment of industrialization and so also perceived as within the matrix of modernization and its ills. The *carusi* were the young boys who worked in the Sicilian sulfur mines. Sulfur had been mined in Sicily since at least the seventeenth century. Mining activity increased slowly throughout the eighteenth century, and a big jump came after 1815 and the end of the Napoleonic Wars when exports tripled as compared to the prerevolutionary period. The major importer of Sicilian sulfur throughout the nineteenth century was Great Britain. Britain was of course the world's leading industrial power and sulfuric acid became the most widely used industrial chemical. Heavy demand led to a further doubling of exports by the 1830s and a dramatic increase in prices. Not surprisingly many new mines were opened. Overproduction and the discovery of an alternative process for producing sulfuric acid, using sulfur-containing pyrites of which Spain

was the leading supplier, threatened the Sicilian sulfur industry in the 1840s until an important new use was found for the mineral, namely the prevention of oidium, a grape disease. As a result, production and exports increased steadily from the 1850s, with France joining Britain as a major importer. The discovery of large sulfur deposits in Louisiana and Texas would eventually eclipse Sicilian production, but in the 1890s Sicily still accounted for 80–90 percent of the world's brimstone sulfur, and production exceeded 500 tons by the end of the century, at least 10 times what it had been in 1830 (Squarzina 1963).

The major sulfur-producing region in Sicily stretched in an arc from Girgenti (Agrigento) to Caltanissetta and a bit beyond in the central southern part of the island; there were also important deposits around Palermo. Initially sulfur was not so much mined as dug up out of the ground as the deposits were easily visible on the surface. By 1850, though, many of the surface deposits had been exhausted and the sulfur miners began to dig down to the underground veins. This work was generally carried out by a *picconiere*, or the wielder of the pickaxe, who contracted with the property owner to work the sulfur deposit (usually for 6 or 12 years and in return for a 15–40 percent share of the mined sulfur). Once the mineral had been extracted it was melted down in a pit kiln or calcerone (later a more sophisticated furnace) to remove impurities and poured into large forms. It is this latter process which creates the offensive odor associated with sulfur works.

The depth of the mines gradually increased and averaged 80 meters by 1890 with some as deep as 195 meters. As the mines got deeper it became progressively more advantageous for the *picconiere* to hire one or several workers to carry the mineral up out of the mine and to the calcerone. That worker came to be known as a *carusu* or boy in the local dialect. In order to get more directly to the mineral, mines were generally dug at a steep angle and crude steps, which often became muddy and slippery, were cut into the rock for access; ladders too might be used. The mine then followed the vein of sulfur wherever it went. The primary task of the *carusu* was to make repeated trips in and out of the mine, which might be damp, smelly, and hot (over 40°C); up the steps he hauled a heavy canvas bag of sulfur resting on a rough cushion between his neck and shoulders and strapped to his forehead. These loads, incredibly, were reported to range from 25–30 kg for the youngest *carusi* and up to 70–80 for the 16–18 year olds. Most of the *carusi* were boys though some males, especially those too small to wield a pickaxe, might remain *carusi* as adults. The main attraction for the *picconiere* was of course the low wage which he could pay the boys. Small stature also made movement easier through the low, narrow tunnels of the mines. Most *carusi* were over 10, though there were certainly 7, 8, and 9 year olds as well. A very small number of *carusi* were girls, though as the

carusu worked practically naked because of the high temperatures, the girls all stopped working before adolescence. It was heavy work and so the workday normally did not exceed 6 hours, and was rarely more than 8 (though Franchetti and Sonnino report 8–10 hour days). Usually all the mine workers lived and slept at the mine during the week, probably in a common dormitory on beds of hay, though there were also reports of *carusi* sleeping outdoors next to their piles of sulfur in order to protect them from thieving colleagues. Almost none of the *carusi* went to school. During the last decade of the nineteenth century, the total number of sulfur workers in Sicily grew from about 28,000 to about 38,000, while the child workers (under 15), mostly *carusi*, grew from 6,000 to 8,000, a fairly constant 21 percent of the workforce. From another point of view the *Carusi* accounted for only about 3–4 per cent of Sicilian 10–14 year olds.⁹ The *carusu* worked directly for the *picconiere* and was usually paid relative to the amount of sulfur he hauled. The usual practice was for the *carusu* (or his parents if he were young) to receive an initial payment or *soccorso morto* from the *picconiere*. The *carusu* then had to slowly work off the *soccorso morto*, though some reportedly never did. This arrangement tied the *carusu* to a particular *picconiere* and gave the *picconiere* more or less parental rights and authority (including the right to beat the *carusu*). Some reformers harshly criticized both parents and *picconieri* for this sort of “economic slavery.” Others instead pointed out that *carusi* moved fairly easily from *picconiere* to *picconiere*. Apparently *picconieri* in need of *carusi* might pay off a *soccorso morto* and so purchase labor (just as parents might also pay off the debt and so free up their children). *Carusu* attempts to switch *picconieri* without paying off the *soccorso morto* (a frequent occurrence) might instead lead to violent reaction and even murder (Amari 1990; Colajanni 1894, 638–43; Franchetti and Sonnino 1877, 472–89; Gurrfra 1908; MAIC 1907, 8–15; Squarzina 1963; White Mario 1894).

Parliamentary Debate

Between 1870 and 1886 at least eight different laws (depending how one counts) addressing the issue of child labor were proposed in the Italian parliament. Only the last made it through the difficult process of discussion and approval in both the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. Those proposals and their fates tell us much about the child labor debate, the growing sense of urgency that something needed to be done, and the considerable obstacles to any sort of legislative proposal at all. The areas covered by the proposals varied, and the law eventually approved was in many ways the most modest. Proposed minimum working ages varied

from 9 to 11, and maximum workdays were to be regulated in more or less articulated schemes for ages as high as 16. Two of the proposals also included special measures relative to female adult labor and pregnancy.

Beyond the details of just what activities and age groups should be regulated, a number of themes recurred in the debate. Primary among these was of course the need to protect small children from exploitation and overwork, especially in the mines and textile works. But exploitation by whom? Indifferent and greedy employers naturally came under attack, though unfeeling parents were blamed as well. With regard to those parents, more compassionate critics recognized the role of cruel necessity and misery in their choices. Some legislators attacked the child labor legislation proposals as violating either the freedom of labor and industry or the rights of parents. In response it was pointed out that Britain, the country most devoted to the maintenance of liberty, also had the most developed legislation to protect child workers. Indeed reference to foreign examples, especially the British one, was a constant theme of the debate. By 1886 legislators decried that Italy was virtually the only "civilized" nation without child labor legislation; even semi-barbaric Russia had taken measures.¹⁰

Although the concerted effort began in 1870, an attempt to regulate child labor in Italy was made as early as November 1859 when the first phase of unification was still incomplete. A law passed at that time forbade work below ground for children under 10, but only applied to several northern regions. In 1865 a regulation extended that legislation to the entire kingdom but it seems to have been entirely ignored.¹¹ The issue did not come up again until 1870 when a health code proposed in the Senate included an article prohibiting factory and mine work for children under the age of 9 (though arguments were made in favor of both 8 and 10) and imposing fines on employers in violation. Discussion of the proposed code only took place in 1873 when the child labor article was championed by, among others, Carlo Maggiorani, a Roman physician who in 1863 had fled the Papal States and gone into exile in Palermo. While in Sicily he had seen firsthand the *carusi* at work in the mines:

One has to have witnessed that tearful scene; one has to have seen how their poor bodies are transformed under the heavy mass of mineral that presses down upon their tender shoulders; one has to have heard their ceaseless cries and known the stern gaze of the miner who keeps watch over them . . . That base industry condemns the individual inexorably to physical and moral degradation.¹²

Both the deformation of the *carusu's* body and the responsibility of the *picconiere* were themes that would recur in the long debate over

children working in the Sicilian mines. The health code was in fact approved in the Senate but failed to come up for discussion or vote in the Chamber of Deputies before the legislature ended.

That very same year, though, figures appeared supporting Maggiorani's claim. War Ministry statistics revealed high rates of rejection among military conscripts from Girgenti and Caltanissetta for upper body deformities. In fact, the figures for Caltanissetta had been increasing steadily for cohorts born in the late 1840s (and so drafted two decades later) and remarkably doubled for the 1850 cohort as compared to that of 1849 (figures published in 1873). Whereas the average number of rejects for upper body deformity per 1000 inhabitants was 0.46 in Sicily as a whole (and 0.41 in Italy), the rates in Caltanissetta, Girgenti, and Palermo (where sulfur was hauled out of the mines on children's backs) were between 0.80 and 0.94. The digging of ever deeper mines and the increased need for *carusi* basically dates from the 1850s, chronology that conforms pretty well with the deformity figures. Partly in response to these revelations a new Mining Law proposed in the Chamber of Deputies in 1875 included an article prohibiting work in the underground parts of mines and quarries for children under 12 (children under 10 were also to be barred from work in the above ground areas). The proposed maximum workday was to be 6 hours for workers under 15 and 8 hours for those aged 15–18. The law's presentation referred specifically to the military conscript statistics and included some of them as an appendix. The Mining Law, however, never made it to the floor of the Chamber.¹³

Contemporary with this last proposal, the classic Italian debate over child labor between Luigi Luzzatti and Alessandro Rossi began. Luzzatti was a lifetime parliamentarian (and briefly prime minister) and among the most authoritative voices of lay Liberal social reform. Rossi instead, first a deputy and then appointed to the Senate in 1870, was an enlightened wool manufacturer from Schio (in Venetia) and among those Catholics who sought cooperation rather than conflict with the Italian state after 1870. Their debate began at the Economists' Congress of January 1875 in Milan where Luzzatti gave a speech advocating a law regulating child and female labor. Rossi responded in print the next year in *Nuova Antologia*, the leading organ of Liberal elite opinion at the time. He argued that the condition of the working class had been steadily improving, an improvement which was entirely in the interest of industrialists as it translated into better and healthier workers. That paternal impulse, according to Rossi, provided better protection for young workers than the state could. Not only would child labor legislation likely be ineffective, it would be an insult to industrialists and, subjecting them to suspicion and repression, would likely extinguish the sort of benevolent paternalism practiced by Rossi himself.

It would lead then to the replacement of a class of enlightened proprietors with another more mean-spirited one; and it would promote conflict rather than concord between the classes. For Rossi the solution lay not in greater policing but in progress and the promotion of Christian values. He did however concede that children should be banned from the Sicilian sulfur mines (Rossi 1876). Luzzatti responded in the same forum, arguing from personal observation that children were working long hours in filthy and poorly ventilated environments often exposed to dangerous machines and chemicals. He also cited various other sources describing, for example, the plight of children in Venetian match factories and including an estimate of 19,000 children (presumably under 15) employed in the silk industry, mostly girls of course and of whom more than 10 percent were under 9 years old. He observed nonetheless that there was profound ignorance in Italy on the subject of child labor. Italy, he thought, should follow the British example; indeed in Britain arguments resembling those now heard in Italy had greeted the first child labor legislation, legislation that came later to be generally praised. Insofar as obeying such a law might result in some financial sacrifice for factory owners, Luzzatti insisted that the law must be well enforced by a team of inspectors so as not to favor those who chose to disobey it (Luzzatti 1876).

One response to Luzzatti's lament about the dearth of information on child labor came from Franchetti and Sonnino's famous 1876 study (published 1877) of Sicily. That pioneer work of social research included a supplementary chapter on children in the sulfur mines. Franchetti and Sonnino confirmed the plight of the *carusi*, the hard nature of the work, the bleakness of these children's world, and the physical damage they suffered. Less alarmist than some later reports, *La Sicilia nel 1876* well described the problem and sought to offer solutions (Franchetti and Sonnino 1877, 472–89). That same year also saw the so-called parliamentary revolution in which the Historic Right (to which Luzzatti adhered) was replaced by the left which had until then been in opposition. The new government, avowedly committed to social reform, resurrected the defunct health code proposal (of 1870–1873) and, in response to the need felt by Luzzatti and others, initiated a study of child and female labor (discussed below). However, to the surprise of some, the new interior minister, Giovanni Nicotera, eliminated the earlier article on child labor from the health code. Nicotera announced that he preferred to deal with child labor in a separate law.

That omission nonetheless raised the ire of Maggiorani and also Alfonso Giordano, perhaps the leading voice for the plight of the *carusi* between the 1870s and the turn of the century. Giordano was, like Maggiorani, a physician and owned sulfur mines in Lercara (province of Palermo).

His observations were direr still. In Lercara, he claimed, most *carusi* were under 10, some as young as 5. They made 18–20 trips a day down into the mines—mines in Palermo at the time reportedly ranged from 50 to 120 meters in depth—and worked as many as 10 hours a day. Giordano also cited recent reports on the silk industry which reported girls younger than 7 at work and workdays which in the summer stretched to 15 hours. Overwork of this sort and from such a young age encouraged a series of diseases (scrofula, rickets, chlorosis, tuberculosis, and so on) and in Como led to a measurable fertility decline (over 20 percent between the 1830s and 1860s). Work had so sallowed the complexion of the girls from Brianza, the hilly region between Como and Lecco, that their traditional beauty was but a memory. Giordano's discussion comes from early December 1877, and Nicotera promised that he would propose a child labor law by the end of January. He resigned, however, over a different issue later in the month and so was unable to keep his promise.¹⁴

Subsequent initiatives regarding child labor came from the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce (MAIC) which carried out investigations of child and female labor in 1877 and 1879.¹⁵ Both were conducted by sending questionnaires to prefects and other presumably privileged observers. The first though was sent only to selected provinces including of course the major textile-producing and mining ones. It confirmed some of the claims reviewed above: workdays as long as 14 hours in Bergamo, children as young as 5 working in Florentine silk factories and Neapolitan pasta manufactures, deformities suffered by the *carusi* but also by young slate miners in Liguria. Generally speaking, 10 to 12-hour days were not unusual, and 6, 7, and 8 year-olds could be found working throughout the peninsula. The study also found that while adult male laborers normally earned between 2 and 3 lire per day, women earned about 1 and children 0.5 (MAIC 1877).

That first study, however, seems to have been deemed inadequate as just two years later another circular was sent out, this time to all provinces. Recipients were basically the same as in 1877: prefects and select mayors, chambers of commerce and industrialists, health officials, mine inspectors, and, for the view of the worker, self-help societies. In spite of opinions like that of Rossi, this second survey began from the assumption that a law was needed and asked recipients to comment on a draft of legislation included with the questionnaire (MAIC 1880). Before the results of the 1879 study were published, Luzzatti also drew up his own proposed law; it was read in the Chamber in November of that year. Both proposals covered factories and mines over a minimum size (15–20 employees). Luzzatti set a minimum working age of 11 as compared to the minister's 9. Both included a variable maximum workday based on age,

though Luzzatti's imposed stricter limits. Both dealt with night work and dangerous or unhealthy professions and covered all workers up to age 15 or 16 (Luzzatti also included measures relative to women over 16; both included enforced pregnancy leave). The ministry version notably required that all child workers under 15 have completed lower elementary school; in keeping with the 1877 law which had made three years of school attendance (normally ages 6–9) mandatory for all children. Luzzatti included detailed measures creating a corps of inspectors to enforce the laws. In various ways these proposals were more ambitious than even the eventual law of 1902.¹⁶

The Geography of Child Labor

Meanwhile the results of the MAIC study were published revealing a wide range of opinion and providing a true geography of Italian child labor. Not surprisingly, some of the most distressing reports came from Sicily, especially Caltanissetta. Several respondents—physicians, some administrators—reported examples of quasi-slavery and abuse, *carusi* punished by hard pinching and burns inflicted on their calves with oil lamps. Still worse were the permanent scars they carried on their bodies including curved spines and hunchbacks; Bruzzo had noted this problem already a few years earlier (Bruzzo 1875, 15–16). As the mines got deeper and deeper, the *carusi*'s job of hauling heavy loads of sulfur up slippery steps, usually barefoot, became more onerous. A faint compensation, harder work meant that the youngest children were used less and less. Many *carusi*, it seems, were foundlings or orphans or else simply abandoned to the *picconieri* by their parents beginning at ages as young as 7. Frequently the *picconiere* would use his own children as *carusi*, though the parent–child relationship does not always seem to have improved the sort of treatment received. Indeed the beatings typically administered to the *carusi* came across as a simple extension of the sort of discipline meted out to poor children generally in Sicily. What emerges out of these descriptions, then, is a world in which, according to bourgeois observers, normal parental sentiment had been extinguished by extreme misery. Moreover, the suffering of the *carusi* had to be balanced against that of the family as a whole should it be deprived of the boy's daily earning of 80 cents or so (generally above the wage paid to children for other jobs). Indeed various respondents noted that the proposed law could cause true hardship, both in denying poor families an important source of income and in generally disrupting and threatening one of Sicily's most important economic activities. Many of the orphans and foundlings working in the mines, it was feared, would be reduced to abject poverty and

abandonment insofar as local orphanages and foundling homes were completely unable to accommodate them.

At the same time, others—industrialists and some prefects—claimed that horror stories about the *carusi* were exaggerated, the product of a group of oversentimental philanthropists. The *carusi* instead were generally well-treated and were absolutely necessary both to the industry and their families. *Carusi* were paid according to how much sulfur they carried and so could decide how hard, and how often, they wanted to work. Indeed, insofar as the *picconiere* depended on these boys, the *carusi* were the true “tyrants” of the Sicilian sulfur industry. Moreover, the *carusi* contracted directly with the *picconiere* who was in turn paid for the number of forms he produced. As such it would be pointless to penalize the mine owners for violations of a child labor law as they had no control over employment of the *carusi*. Representatives of the working class added that worker families in Sicily would surely oppose the proposed law.¹⁷

Italy's other major island, Sardinia, was also the site of important mining activity, especially for zinc and lead. Children worked in these mines as well, and about 20 percent of the work force was under 14; an admitted underestimate counted 500 boys and 300 girls (many reportedly under 10). In Sardinian mining, children generally worked above ground sorting, sifting, and cleaning the minerals, heavy work though probably not so heavy as that of the Sicilian *carusi*. As in so many cases, observers feared that denying employment to these children would simply plunge their families into still darker poverty (MAIC 1880, 798–837). In Italy's other major mining area, Tuscany, children as young as nine reportedly worked in the mines and quarries but doing relatively light work (MAIC 1880, 528–91).

In most of the South and islands there were few reports of children employed in factories for the simple reason that there were few factories. One self-help society did describe wool and cotton mills near Salerno to which children as young as 5 and 6 made the daily 10–12 km walk and then worked 12-hour days on their feet breathing the dusty air of the factory with predictable negative effects on their respiratory systems and overall growth and development. In Puglia children almost as young worked as masons' apprentices carrying heavy loads of bricks and other building materials up tall ladders. But non-industrial work of this sort would not be covered by the proposed law, and neither would work in the fields or fishing, both of which employed small children. Similarly the regions of the Center reported little in the way of child industrial labor save in the Marche where a thousand or so children worked in factories and manufacturing units “that process animal and vegetable products.”¹⁸

North of the Apennines, industry was of course more developed and so the presence of children in factories more frequent. In addition to textile

work, children in Bologna, for example, worked in pin and hook factories, where they tended to suffer from eye diseases and tuberculosis; match factories (often singled out as particularly unhealthy) where they contracted gum and jaw diseases; and pottery factories where rheumatism was a frequent complaint. It is difficult to assess, of course, the degree to which these diseases were true professional hazards as opposed to the result of dietary deficiencies (e.g. scurvy among the match workers) or other causes. In nearby Ferrara, instead, one-third of the workers in soap and cheese factories were children, while the major concern relative to child labor there was the rice paddies where children spent hours under a hot sun, up to their knees in stagnant water bent over pulling weeds. That concern was repeated most everywhere rice was cultivated (MAIC 1880, 405–501).

Except for a few small textile mills, the northeast was relatively under developed. One chamber of commerce raised the issue of agricultural work and the fact that in that sector too there was a need to combat the overworking of young children. In Udine, instead, young children from the ages of 5 and 6 were emigrating with their fathers to nearby Austria-Hungary to work as assistants in various building trades, carrying heavy loads of bricks and the like, and also as kiln tenders working dangerously close to hot fires and handling the still-hot bricks as they came out from the kiln. One prefect wondered what sort of measures the state could take to protect these Italian children outside the borders of the kingdom.¹⁹

Moving westward, we enter into the major textile-producing areas and so encounter the largest industrial employers of children. In Verona, there are also descriptions of Italian glass factories—as we have seen an industry central to concerns about emigrant child labor—where, it was argued, the proposed law would be especially harmful. Glass factories—in Italy as in France—operated very hot furnaces which were impractical to extinguish and relight each day. As such they ran continuously day and night. The glassblowers used child assistants for a number of necessary tasks and would therefore be severely hampered if children were not allowed to work at night and on Sundays as proposed in the law (MAIC 1880, 380–5).

Observations regarding the silk and other textile industries reinforce those reviewed earlier. The position taken by the industrialists was basically the one to which they would stick for the next three decades; most were willing to accept a minimum age (in this case 9), but strongly opposed the various maximum workdays proposed for 9 to 15-year-old girls because that limit would necessarily also apply to adult reelers who could not work without the assistance of the beating-machine girls. That limit would cost the industry so much that it would no longer be able to compete internationally. Moreover, it was argued, the work was light and, as one silk

manufacturer from Verona described, the girls were far better off in the mills than outside them:

I believe that for a healthy nine-year-old, 12 hours of work with a mid-day break of two hours as is practiced in the spooling rooms poses no threat to her health. The work she does is not tiring and more resembles a game; all she does is to watch over the automatically spooling thread and knot it up when it breaks. In my factory, for example, there are more than 100 of these girls who arrived emaciated and in rags and after a few years of 12-hours-per-day work are pictures of health . . . [A]fter work, rather than appearing tired and testy, they leap, dance, and run with that happy and expansive joy that is the best proof of physical and moral well being . . . and surely it is much better for these children to be brought together and watched over in a factory while earning their keep and becoming accustomed to the morality of work than to be left begging in the muddy streets or else idling away the hours on the damp bunks of their filthy houses. (MAIC 1880, 390)

This manufacturer's comments fit into a wider discourse that espoused the invigorating virtues of work, though one wonders if the girls could really have been so very energetic after such a long workday.²⁰ Moreover, his description of the florid good health of these workers contradicts other reports of the pallid masses of underdeveloped girls working in textile manufacture. Numerous reports from textile factories in Lombardy and Piedmont revealed again instances of workers as young as 5 and workdays as long as 15 hours, though in many cases workers were at least 12 and worked 12-hour days. In various places, the air quality in the factories was described as poor and the source of respiratory illnesses. Children textile workers were also described as suffering from rickets, physical deformities, and higher rates of mortality than children either not working or working in agriculture.

By contrast, the prefect of Cremona in the central Po Valley offered a particularly distressing picture of the textile-working proletariat, one in which the working conditions of children and women had initiated a vicious cycle of decadence and decline:

The children working in these factories are almost always themselves the children of women also working in the factory . . . These children frequently suffer poor health from birth. The mother likely worked till the last days of her pregnancy, and then a few days after birth she returned to work, coping with nursing as best she could. At the age of two or three the child is sent to a crèche where a woman entirely ignorant of the first precepts of hygiene takes a miserable fee and keeps as many children as she can in a squalid room from dawn till dusk . . . To make caring for them easier, the more

troublesome children are bound to benches from which they scream and cry . . . These crèches, which are a true calamity, a seedbed of sickness, thrive and prosper under the eyes of mayors and municipal health commissions . . . (MAIC 1880, 224)

This passage also raises the important issue of how working parents might care for their children. At one end of the child's pre-working life, the mother's need to return to work soon after giving birth created the miserable sort of arrangements described here. At the other end, the age at which children start to work determined when they no longer needed other forms of looking after during working hours. Both problems could be encountered throughout the peninsula. The prefect of Trapani in western Sicily, for example, noted that children there normally began to work at the age of six, partially out of necessity and partially because there was no crèche where their poor working parents could send them (MAIC 1880, 797). While one observer from the Marches noted the plight of parents forced to leave their children on their own or else in the care of "an old woman who lets them wander around the town. It is truly sad to see two to six year olds wandering around and playing in the puddles they come across in the streets" (MAIC 1880, 521).

Ideally the children of the proletariat would be cared for in locally funded crèches till age 6 and then attend elementary school till age 9 when they could start working. We explore below the issue of crèches and the movement to create them starting in the 1840s, but the comments reviewed here suggest that an adequate system was not in place by 1880. And though lower elementary school had been made obligatory in 1877, in many provinces and *comuni* that requirement could not be enforced for decades for the simple reason that there was a lack of schools and teachers. For working parents, whether in factories or agriculture, the issue of how to care for children until they reached working age was a difficult one. Raising that age in some sectors threatened to make it still more so.

Rounding out the picture presented by the 1880 MAIC report was the Italian census of 1881. That census, united Italy's third, sought to classify population by age and occupation. The statisticians carrying it out recognized the inevitable problems they faced, including underestimation due to the seasonal nature of work in some industries and the difficulty of evaluating domestic industry. Nonetheless, their results provide an interesting portrait and offer a quantitative complement to the qualitative MAIC study. Not surprisingly legislators looked to it as well, and the census classification of population aged 9–14 by profession for each of Italy's 69 provinces and for 65 selected *comuni* was included with the 1884 Child Labor Law proposal (described below).²¹

The census categories reported in that proposal were predictably mining and industry; agricultural work continued to be excluded from the debate over child labor. The general figures revealed the following:

	<i>workers aged 9–14</i>	<i>total population aged 9–14</i>
M	149,300	1,658,630
F	144,217	1,591,325

So about equal numbers of boys and girls were engaged in industrial pursuits, broadly understood, and accounted for about 9 percent of all children aged 9–14 (again one has to keep in mind that most child workers at the time worked in agriculture). By way of comparison, the French Industrial Enquiry of 1839–1845 counted 143,665 children under 16 working in industry. According to Heywood this enquiry covered “approximately half of the workers in the manufacturing sector.” If that’s so, then both the French enquiry and the Italian 1881 census counted about 300,000 child industrial workers while the total populations were 34 million in France (1841) and 28 million in Italy (1881). Given the different fertility histories of the two countries, the industrial child employment situations may have been about the same in Italy in the 1880s as they were in France in the 1840s, about what one might expect given Italy’s slower industrialization relative to France (Heywood 1988, 104–5). The figures on mining also conform to expectations. Out of a total of 4412 Italian boys working in mining, 3171 of them were Sicilians. The textile figures instead held some surprises: children working in textiles numbered about 10,000 boys and nearly 98,000 girls (a bit over 1/3 of all child workers in industry). Only about 30,000 of these children, however, worked in silk manufacture. Of even greater importance was the category of linen, hemp, and jute which accounted for 41,000 child workers; cotton production employed another 23,000. The most important region for textiles was, predictably, Lombardy (32,500 child workers) which together with Piedmont (8,000) certainly accounted for most of the silk workers. More surprising, and explaining the relative importance of linen and cotton, were the numbers of child textile workers in the South: Calabria (18,000), Sicily (11,000), Campania (9,500), and Puglia (8,500). Likely, most of these children worked at home which accounts for the fact that they are never mentioned in the child labor debates; they would not have been covered by any of the laws proposed over the years, all of which concentrated on factory work and did not seek to regulate domestic industry.

The next most important industry was clothing manufacture which employed 36,000 boys and over 30,000 girls (after textile manufacture the

only other major activity for girls). The primary activity for boys was shoemaking and for girls that of seamstress. These activities were concentrated in the major cities (Milan, Florence, Naples, and to a lesser extent Caserta, Catania, and Rome). Boys were also employed in large numbers in the "construction and maintenance of buildings and roads" (53,000), especially as assistants to masons and carpenters, activities pretty well spread out through the peninsula. Over 17,000 boys also worked in the metal industry; Milan and Turin were the most important centers though metal working could be found throughout the North as well as in Tuscany and Campania. Clothing and shoe manufacture were generally carried out in small workshops and so not covered by the proposed legislation. Neither were outdoor activities like the building trade. Metal working instead likely qualified as industrial. About 10,000 children worked in the food industry, especially boys in Naples (1,143).

A number of industries generally considered dangerous and unhealthy employed children. Those which received most attention included print shops, match factories, and later, glass works. The 1881 census counted over 2,000 boys working in the print shops (1/4 of those in Milan) and nearly 700 children in match production. Over 70 percent of the match-makers were girls, probably including most of the 214 girls in Turin employed in the more general category of chemical products. Paper production, an industry also criticized from time to time, employed 1,500 boys and 1,000 girls (Milan, Novara, Turin), while glass working employed about 280 boys.²² The 1880 MAIC study together with the 1881 census give us some idea of how widespread and diverse child labor was in Italy. Even ignoring, as legislators did, the issue of agricultural and outdoor occupations, this was not an easy area to regulate.

More Parliamentary Debate

The 1880 MAIC report of course found an echo in parliament. Marco Minghetti, last prime minister of the historic right (1873–1876) and Luzzatti's political patron, judged respondents to be generally in favor of legislation and relaunched the pair's earlier proposal. The minister responded that, following completion of the survey the government now intended to propose its own law, which it did a couple of weeks later. That proposal, of June 1880, was in fact presented as a less extreme variation on the Luzzatti/Minghetti version and included numerous references to the survey. To begin with it judged that only 45 of the 794 respondents opposed the introduction of a law, mostly in Sicily and among northern industrialists; these were of course, aside from the child workers and their families,

the group that would be primarily affected by the law. As to the nature of the proposed law, on the crucial issue of age, the limit was kept at 9, rather than Luzzatti's 11. It was feared that the 11 year old limit would have created a population of 9 and 10 year olds who, neither in school nor at work, would be abandoned to the streets and so possibly pose a threat to public order. In other states with higher minimum ages (Britain and Austria at 10, Germany and France at 12, Switzerland at 14), it was pointed out, the earliest law had usually set an age of 9. The proposal also included careful and reasoned discussion of maximum workdays, night-time and dangerous work, the education requirement, and the articles relative to adult female labor. Inspectors were to be hired, as Luzzatti had insisted, but penalties for violation of the law were light. All this careful work, however, was apparently for naught as the law never came up for discussion and the legislature ended in late 1882.²³

Only in the first months of 1884, three and a half years after the previous proposal, was the child labor issue revived (in the Senate and with reference to the 1881 census results). One can only imagine that the relatively elaborate proposals of 1880 threatened too many powerful interests. The 1880 MAIC report suggested that an important chunk of bourgeois/administrative opinion favored a law, though much of that opinion came from observers in nonindustrial provinces and regions. There existed then a fairly broad consensus that something ought to be done to protect working children in Italy and—perhaps still more importantly—that Italy should follow the example of other modern European and “civilized” nations in passing a child labor law. The devil, though, seems to have been in the details, and even the ministerial proposal of 1880, which substantially tempered the Luzzatti/Minghetti one, must have inspired sufficient opposition from industrial and mining interests to insure its being buried.

By 1884, this situation had become something of an embarrassment. Even backward Russia by then had passed a child labor law. The new minister sought to remedy the situation by proposing a modest law stripped of many of the carefully worked out provisions of the 1880 versions. The new proposal, as it emerged from committee, predictably set a minimum age limit of 9 and limited the workday for ages 9–12 to 8 hours. The minimum age for underground work was set at 10, and children under 15 were to be barred from dangerous and unhealthy professions (as defined in a subsequent set of norms). There were no specific measures relative to women, night work, or maximum workdays for children over 12. Penalties remained light and there was no provision for the hoped for labor inspectors. For the major industries we have discussed, the new proposal meant that the silk beating-machine girls would have to be at least 12 (in order to work the same shift as the older reelers) and *carusi* at least 10. The estimated million

or so women over age 15 working in the textile industry, together with the many girls 12–15, would be unaffected.²⁴

What came to be known as the Berti Law (though by the time of its passage Berti was no longer minister) did not come up for debate till December 1885 but was then quickly approved in both the Senate and the Chamber by large margins and with limited debate. On February 11, 1886, following 16 years of parliamentary debate, Italy finally had a child labor law. It was, however, a law which satisfied few legislators. Indeed the most common refrain was that of the lawmaker who deemed it inadequate but determined to vote in favor anyway judging it better than no law at all. Its sponsor, the minister who replaced Berti, described it as “the triumph of a just principle.” Probably only a limited and “inadequate” law could have hoped to achieve a consensus that brought together not only the former foes Rossi and Luzzatti, but also the few Socialists who had only recently entered parliament.

In the Senate, Rossi continued to argue from a basically *laissez-faire* position, but was willing nonetheless to accept the limited provisions of the Berti Law. With regard to existing laws, rather than follow the usual practice of praising liberal Britain, he described the British legislation as having created an “inexplicable labyrinth of laws and regulations which pen in and suffocate individual liberty.” Nor did he believe the Child Labor Law in France was functioning well. With regard to child labor in general he thought the stories of abuse were exaggerated and claimed that statistics indeed showed that children working in industry were healthier than those working in agriculture. The latter were indeed still subject to debilitating environmental and dietary maladies like malaria and pellagra; and insofar as their small wages increased family income, factory children may indeed have been better nourished than their rural cousins. Rossi argued that Italian industry needed encouragement not shackles of this sort; indeed the fear that child (and female) labor legislation might harm Italy’s infant industries was a theme that would continue to characterize subsequent debate.

Luzzatti authored the committee report for the Chamber. He proposed no changes to the version approved in the Senate, despite the fact that it differed so significantly from his earlier proposals. He had come to the conclusion that this law was, for the moment, the most that could be hoped for and so supported it even though, “no one is more convinced than me of its insufficiency.”

Andrea Costa, elected to the Chamber in 1882, was Italy’s first Socialist deputy. He criticized the proposed law for seeking to limit child labor without compensating families for the costs involved. Nonetheless he agreed to vote for it in support of the general principle of social intervention in the

processes of production and because it would increase adult employment. His most interesting comments reveal how concern about the danger posed by idle youth spanned the entire political spectrum. He argued that without moral, social, and economic protection, "the first consequence [of the law]. . . will be to increase the number . . . of those little vagabonds who besiege our *piazze* and our cafés and who are alas . . . [among] the miserable and sad spectacle[s] that our much heralded civilization has to offer." The Socialist Antonio Maffi also announced he would vote for this unenforceable law in support of the "humanitarian principle."²⁵

The Berti Law

The Berti Law of February 1886 did not go immediately into effect. According to its final article, the government had six months to draw up a set of norms (or *regolamento*) for the law's enforcement. The MAIC appointed a commission, headed by Luzzatti, which met in March and April to accomplish this task. The norms were then discussed by the Consiglio dell'industria e commercio (Council of Industry and Commerce, also administered by the MAIC) in June and issued by decree in September, a month behind schedule.²⁶

In spite of the obvious intention of the legislators to pass a very limited law, the *regolamento* tightened it up and reintroduced restrictions included in some of the earlier failed proposals. To begin with the *regolamento* defined as dangerous or unhealthy both night work and the hauling of mineral on head or shoulders from below ground to the outdoors (that is up out of the mine). However, rather than follow the law to the letter (which forbid children under 15 from engaging in professions defined as dangerous and unhealthy), in both cases a minimum age was set at 12 (and 12–15 year-olds were allowed 8 hours of night work). These were crucial norms as they effectively further raised the minimum age of *carusi* from 10 to 12 and for silk workers from 9 to 12 insofar as they worked night shifts.

The *regolamento* also required, as had the Health Code proposed in 1870, that child workers aged 9–15 have a work booklet (*libretto di lavoro*) that included a record of vaccinations (presumably for smallpox) and a medical certificate attesting to the child's good health and ability to work. The introduction of this document was a significant step in both social bureaucratization and medicalization; it is discussed further below.²⁷

The Berti Law included no special provisions for enforcement, for example creation of the inspectors Luzzatti had wanted. Nonetheless, two industrial inspectors had been created as part of the MAIC in 1879 and the *regolamento* explained in detail how they would enforce the new law in

factories and how the several dozen already existing mining inspectors would do so in the mines. Most importantly, the *regolamento* also called for the use of law enforcement agents when needed.

In spite of opposition from several members of the consiglio, the *regolamento* was approved after several adjustments (reflected in the above description). It importantly also allowed for temporary exemptions. The silk industry had requested one of these relative to article 3—limiting the workday of 9–12 year olds to 8 hours—as soon as the law had been passed; the consiglio granted them one for a year starting the day the law took effect and so until August 1887. During that year the well-organized silk lobby (Associazione dell'industria e del commercio della seta) requested further exemptions, the simple elimination of article 3, or else the combination of an increased minimum age (to 10) and increased maximum workday (to 12 hours). In December 1887 (after 4 months when many silk factories were certainly in violation of the law) the consiglio issued another exemption, this time for 2 years till August 1889. Publication of the *regolamento* in September 1886, however, meant that the consiglio no longer had the authority to issue such an exemption. In an obviously difficult situation, the minister advised the prefects of Como and Cremona—who wondered if they should be fining the silk manufacturers—that given the critical condition in which the silk industry found itself at the moment, they should use the “greatest tolerance” in enforcing the law. Whether because of economic necessity or a lack of political will, article 3 seems to have been unenforceable for the silk industry.

In another example of the limits of the 1886 law, the mining inspector from Caltanissetta pointed out that by creating a relay point at the mouth of the sulfur mine, the norm intended to prohibit children under 12 from hauling sulfur up out of the mines (“from below ground to the outdoors”) could be circumvented. In this case the minister insisted that the spirit of the *regolamento* be enforced, though there is little to indicate that it was. In fact, the official 1890 report on the application of the law, published by the Chamber of Deputies, admitted that after 3 years enforcement still left much to be desired.²⁸

Nor did the situation improve dramatically in the following years. Two factory inspectors (later increased to 4) obviously could not be expected to enforce the Child Labor Law throughout Italy and for industries employing several hundred thousands of young workers. In fact enforcement, insofar as the law was enforced, was left almost entirely in the hands of the police. The work booklets became fairly widespread in the more efficiently administered northern regions, but were virtually unknown in the South. The average age of child workers did seem to increase a bit, though probably more as part of the slow process of modernization—more children in

school, marginal increases in wealth—than in response to the law. There were, however, cases of northern textile manufacturers who in order to observe the law preferred laying off all workers under the age of 12 rather than try to comply with the 8-hour maximum.

In 1889 both the Socialist Maffi and the Liberal Luzzatti had occasion to comment on the fate of the law. According to Luzzatti its observation was more the exception than the rule, and according to Maffi the law, only three years after its passage, had simply been forgotten. In 1895, a Socialist paper reported that various provinces of Sicily and the South still had not submitted any reports of child industrial or mining labor (e.g., issuance of work booklets). It seems that the local authorities were not even aware of the law's existence. And still in 1901, the Socialist economist Achille Loria would claim that violation was so systematic and widespread that Italy, unlike Poland, Spain, Russia and even India, still did not have a law that protected its child workers.²⁹

Medics, Clerics, and Socialists

The Italian debate over child labor certainly did not end with the 1886 law. Indeed it became still more intense in the years that followed and in what I have identified as the peak years of Italian social anxiety about childhood, namely the period around 1897–1903. The tenor of the debate also changed after 1886 (or a little before) as the traditional Liberal debate between advocates of *laissez faire* (like Rossi) and those (like Luzzatti) who believed in limited state intervention was increasingly joined by three important groups: physicians, Socialists, and Catholics.

Parliamentarians with medical training had of course played a leading role in the debate from at least Maggiorani's observations of 1873, and initially child labor was meant to be treated as an issue of public health and included in the proposed 1870 Health Code. As it developed, instead, the issue became a juridical or police one and the focus of the 1886 law was not so much the toiling child as the heartless and greedy industrialist or mine owner. Nonetheless, the public health aspect was not abandoned, and in keeping with the ever greater role played by the medical profession in Western societies relative to social or population control, the 1886 *regolamento* stipulated that it should be the physician by means of a medical certificate who determined whether children were sufficiently fit to engage in industrial activities. Subsequently, physicians and others would insist on the importance and expansion of that role, especially insofar as child labor was linked to the typical *fin-de-siècle* anxiety about racial degeneration. Already in the debate preceding passage of the Berti Law, one physician-senator had argued that

factory inspections should be carried out by physicians who were presumably better able to evaluate the medical and physiological impact of work on children. He further argued that the national network of municipal physicians (*medici condotti*) be strengthened and that physicians should be added to both the MAIC and Interior Ministry staffs.³⁰

As mentioned earlier, the first Socialist was elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1882, contemporary with formation of the first Socialist political organizations in Italy. Although the Socialists played only a small role in the pre-1886 debate, they would come to play a larger one in subsequent decades—following creation of the party in 1892—even drawing up their own (perhaps utopian) legislative proposal. The Socialists saw themselves as both the protectors of youth but also of adult male labor whose wages and employment presumably suffered because of the exploitation of inexpensive child (and female) workers.³¹

Although a Catholic like Rossi might be a parliamentarian, it was only in the years leading up to World War I that the church began to relax its hostility toward the usurping Liberal-Masonic-Judaic Italian state³² and condone participation by the faithful in national politics. Catholic participation in the child labor debate then largely took place outside of parliament, especially in some of the more progressive Catholic journals. Primary among these was Salvatore Talamo and Giuseppe Toniolo's *Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Sociali e Discipline Ausiliari* (RISSDA), founded in 1893, a moderate progressive voice that best represented mainstream Christian Democratic ideas on social reform and other issues. It began publication following Leo XIII's encyclical *De rerum novarum*, also known as *The Condition of the Working Class*. In that landmark document the church officially established its opposition to Socialism and Communism (and affirmed the sanctity of private property) while at the same time setting out in general terms a program of worker protection. Specifically with regard to child labor the Pope wrote:

And in regard to children, great care should be taken not to place them in workshops and factories until their bodies and minds are sufficiently developed. For just as very rough weather destroys the buds of spring, so does too early an experience of life's hard toil blight the young promise of a child's faculties and render any true education impossible. Women, again, are not suited for certain occupations: a woman is by nature fitted for home work, and it is that which is best adapted at once to preserve her modesty and to promote the good bringing up of children and the wellbeing of the family.³³

Characteristically the encyclical's wording is general and vague, but the principle of state intervention is implicitly endorsed and reference is

explicitly made to one of those “new things,” namely factory labor. As would increasingly be the case in the political debate as well, child labor was linked to women’s labor.

In its first year of publication, Talamo and Toniolo’s *RISSDA* showed sensitivity to the issue of Italian child labor legislation—noting as had others that the 1886 law was generally ineffective—and claimed for itself a leading voice in the debate. The journal attributed nonenforcement to the negligence and opposition of industrialists but even more to the failure of local authorities. As debate over what would become the second, 1902 law heated up, and the Socialists led by Turati proposed their own version of a child labor law (in May 1900) and staged a demonstration to protest the conservative positions taken on the issue in the Senate (in February 1902), *RISSDA* noted that, not surprisingly, the Socialist orators failed to mention that child and women’s labor legislation “constituted above all a postulate of Catholic social action.” The Piedmontese priest and journalist Alessandro Cantono, later a founding member of the Catholic Italian Popular Party, wrote that Catholics in fact supported the Socialist agitation but noted that it was indeed Catholics who had been in the vanguard of the child and women’s labor movement throughout Europe since the 1870s. The more radical Catholic *Cultura Sociale* (of Romolo Murri) expressed full support on the part of militant Catholics for the Socialist proposal of Turati and Kuliscioff described below. These were of course just the years in which that militant wing of the Christian Democrat movement, largely because of its drift toward quasi-socialist positions, was also heading toward collision with the Episcopal Council and suppression.³⁴

Still more Parliamentary Debate

There were at least two general reactions to the inadequacy of the 1886 law. One was to urge greater compliance with and enforcement of its limited measures. The other, in spite of the fact that both the minimum age and maximum workday limits of the Berti Law were frequently not observed, was to call for more far-reaching legislation, something more in keeping, for example, with Luzzatti’s proposal of 1880 and with the sorts of laws that existed in other European countries. A new law was passed in 1902, but not before another seven versions (again depending upon how one counts) were proposed.

Pressure for a new law came as early as mid-1891, less than five years after the Berti Law had gone into effect. The interior minister at the time was Nicotera, the same who had eliminated the article on child labor from the proposed Health Code in 1877 and then failed to introduce his own

promised child labor law. In 1891 he was a member of di Rudini's cabinet during the nearly three-year interim between Crispi's first and second governments. Nicotera was no more effective this time than he had been before. Crispi and his faction, it should be noted, had been highly critical of the Berti Law, on the one hand as a function of their general opposition to social legislation as a form of state tyranny and on the other because it sought to regulate children engaged in honest and "vigorous" activities while ignoring the real problems of childhood as they saw them, namely involvement in immoral occupations practiced in public streets, cafés and theaters.³⁵

The first formal proposal for a new law came in November 1893, 20 months after Leo XIII's encyclical on the working class referred to above. The major innovation relative to the Berti Law was that this proposal included measures relative to both children up to the age of 15 and women over 15.³⁶ Underground work, unhealthy or dangerous work, and night work were forbidden to boys under 12 (the minimum age for *carusi*) and girls under 15 (in fact girls and women of all ages were forbidden from working in mines). Between the ages of 12 and 15 boys were allowed to work below ground and could work 6-hour night shifts but were still banned from dangerous and unhealthy occupations. Above the age of 15 there were no restrictions on men but women under 21 were still barred from unhealthy work and night work (and underground work). Medical certificates would be required for 9–15 year olds, and maximum workdays ranged from 6 to 12 hours depending on age and sex. This proposal set the tone for the debate that ensued over the next decade and was accompanied by an important study on women's work. However, although presented in both sessions of the eighteenth legislature (1892–1895) and reviewed in commission, it never came up for discussion.³⁷

A similar proposal was presented again in the Chamber in 1895 (nineteenth legislature 1895–1897) and met the same fate, though it was notable for the carefully prepared commission report that accompanied it by Antonino Di San Giuliano. Di San Giuliano was a Liberal social reformer in the tradition of Luzzatti; he would later become one of Italy's most important foreign ministers. He was also Sicilian and had written on the social conditions of his native island (Di San Giuliano 1894). In his report, Di San Giuliano noted that although the Berti Law was frequently violated there was an encouraging trend to higher average ages for child workers in both sulfur mining and silk manufacture. Specifically with regard to the silk industry he noted that honest industrialists would have preferred raising the minimum age if imposition of a maximum workday for those over 12 could be avoided. Di San Giuliano found this solution problematic though, since under the Berti Law, children as soon as they

passed their thirteenth birthday were working 13 or 14 hours and in a few isolated cases as many as 18. He advocated then a 12-hour limit for boys aged 12–15 and for girls and women aged 12–21.³⁸

In the difficult final years of the decade, following the fall of Crispi, the issue continued to be pressed. In May 1897 (the same month the Neapolitan foundling scandal broke out) the radical deputy and social activist Adolfo Engel protested “that with regard to the regulation of labor, our country is in last place among all civilized nations, Russia included . . . this puts us in a position of true moral inferiority; it is a humiliation for our country.”³⁹ The government did present another couple of child and women’s labor laws in 1898–1899, but neither proposal ever made it out of commission and so to discussion in the Chamber.⁴⁰

Socialist agitation in favor of the protection of child and women workers instead dated from the early 1890s and was led by Anna Kuliscioff. The issue became a major one for the Socialists from about 1897, the year in which Kuliscioff drafted a first proposal for legislation, much discussed at various Socialist and workers’ congresses (Antozzi 1974). By that time the Socialists, led by Filippo Turati and Leonida Bissolati, were an important presence in the Chamber. In early 1898 the two leaders officially “interrogated” the government as to whether it intended to seriously enforce the Berti Law. In particular they were appalled by events that had taken place in a town outside of Alessandria (Piedmont). As Turati recounted it, a cotton manufacturer there had been fined 13,000 lire (children’s wages, recall, might be half a lira per day and that of adult males 2 or 3) for forcing 134 children under 12 to work 12-hour days (6 hours in the daytime and 6 at night). The industrialist reacted by announcing to his 900 adult employees that because of the fine he would have to lay them all off and close the mill. The workers rioted in protest until the marshal of the carabinieri (Italy’s military police) arrived announcing that the fine would be revoked. And indeed Turati read in the Chamber a telegram from the prefect to the mayor instructing that the fine not be imposed so that the unjustified closure of the cotton mill could be avoided. Turati further remarked wryly that normally when the workers took to the *piazza* demanding “bread and work” the authorities reacted by dispersing, arresting, or firing on them and then sought out and tried the instigators. In this case, instead, in which the instigator was on the side of capital, the state had capitulated. Ironically, it was only two months later in May that Turati himself would be arrested as an instigator following the bloody riots in Milan.⁴¹

The new century saw Italy enter into the so-called Giolittian era, a period of rapid economic growth when important strides were made in the area of social legislation.⁴² It was also that moment when public and political concern about children’s issues peaked. It is not a great surprise then that in this

context a more sweeping child and women's labor law was finally approved. The first step in this regard was the presentation of a proposal in December 1900 by the then minister of agriculture, industry and commerce, Paolo Carcano. In an unusual move, a group of 29 Socialist deputies (including Turati and Bissolati) followed this up with their own proposal in May 1901 (essentially Kuliscioff's law). In a seeming bow to the Socialists, the minister appointed a commission, again headed by Di San Giuliano, to review both proposals and produce a compromise version. The Socialist proposal was of course far more extreme than the Carcano one. To begin with it extended coverage of the law beyond factories and mines to include, specifically, rice farming and other salaried agricultural work. Comparison on other points is best accomplished by a table (see table 3.2). As it turned out, once the minimum age had been raised from 10 to 12, Di San Giuliano's commission version differed little from Carcano's original proposal.

The Socialist proposal also called for the creation of professional schools, where children up to age 15 would receive board, clothing, and instruction, and for a maternity fund to provide 75 percent of wages during pre- and postpartum leaves.⁴³

In his as always careful, well-prepared, and moderate report, Di San Giuliano reviewed the various Socialist proposals but inevitably rejected

Table 3.2 1900 Child Labor Law proposals

	<i>Carcano-Di San Giuliano</i>	<i>Kuliscioff-Turati</i>
Minimum age	12	15
Underground work		
Males	Min. age 13	Min. age 20
Females	Forbidden	Forbidden
Night work		
Males	Min. age 15	(Min. age 15)
Females	Min. age 21	Forbidden
Dangerous work		
Males	Min. age 15	Min. age 20
Females	Min. age 21	Forbidden
Enforced pregnancy leave	28 days following birth	6 weeks prior and 6 weeks following birth
Maximum workdays		
Ages 10–12 (transitional)	8 hours	
12–15	11	
Females 15–21	12	
15–18		6 hours
18–20		8
Females 20+		48 hours per week

them for reasons of practicality. He did, however, take a somewhat harder line than he had before with the silk industry which, as we have seen, had largely escaped imposition of the Berti Law.⁴⁴ He rejected, for example, pressure from the Milanese Silk Association to not raise the minimum working age above 10. Di San Giuliano knew the silk industry well and recognized that limiting the 12 to 15 year old beating-machine girls to 11-hour workdays would necessarily also limit the hours of the adult reelers, but contrary to his 1895 position he argued:

[i]t is intolerable that in a civilized country a girl under 15 years of age should spend more than 11 hours on her feet continuously active and vigilant in an environment at once irritatingly dusty and made hot and humid by the nauseous fumes rising out of the basins of macerating cocoons.

With regard to the *carusi* he noted that over the past few years (1897–1900) the percentage of child workers under age 12 (i.e. 9–12 year olds as a percentage of 9–15) had dropped from about 26 percent to below 19 percent. He judged that the industry, which now employed upward of 9000 children, could survive without the youngest workers. Raising the age limit instead to 15 (not to mention 20 as the Socialists proposed) would unemploy an additional 6000+ 12 to 15 year olds and create not only hardship but also the likelihood of public disorder and possibly bloodshed.

Di San Giuliano did also hope that rice work would be classified as unhealthy work; in taking that position he endorsed one of the Socialists' proposals and broke the long tradition of ignoring the issue of child labor in agriculture. Nonetheless that article did not make its way into the final version. One of the major innovation that did was the requirement that workers under age 15 should have attended three years of school. Elementary school had, again, been required since 1877, but by 1901 about one-third of all children still did not attend. Nearly 2 million Italians in fact lived in *comuni* that did not have an elementary school at all, and others had insufficient ones. The law included a 3-year transition period during which children might continue to work (presumably while completing their schooling).⁴⁵

Di San Giuliano's revised proposal came up for a long and intense debate in the Chamber in March 1902.⁴⁶ The initial tone of the debate was set by the physician-deputy Angelo Celli who attacked the pathology of child labor in a tone very much in keeping with contemporary European concerns about racial decadence.⁴⁷ According to Celli, the debilitating effect of work at too young an age explained the poor health of military recruits, and not only in Sicily but in Lombardy and Piedmont as well. He also recited anecdotes relative to a couple of towns, again in Lombardy and

Piedmont, where since the opening of factories the women had grown progressively paler of complexion. And whereas women from these towns had previously been sought out as wet nurses they were apparently no longer deemed fit for that activity. His more general remarks included:

The hard and unhealthy labor of women and children, often at too young an age, contains the insidious and threatening seed of our racial decadence. Few laws are as important for the future of our country as the one we are discussing, a law that offers a remedy for these ills. (258)

Celli also called for physician-inspectors to enforce the law and closed with the comment that the “robust and healthier peoples” held the key to the future. Other deputies also made references, seemingly a standard element of the discourse by 1902 as it had not been in 1886, to the “physical and moral degeneration of the proletarian classes” and the need for “improvement of the race.” One Republican deputy argued that concern about public health and the general good should outweigh any lingering reservations about imposing restrictions on adult women who need better rest and nutrition to ensure “material renewal.” Specifically with reference to women’s reproductive function he added: “Let us protect the beauty of women . . . [which] represents the health of men” (279-Del Balzo). These sorts of comments, by now a typical feature of Western medico-anthropological discourse, would be increasingly used to justify state intervention in various areas.

Predictably, a number of textile manufacturers and mine owners took part in the discussion. Several of them endorsed Di San Giuliano’s version of the law including the 12 year old age limit and 11-hour days. Their comments suggest that by 1902 the 1886 law was generally observed including age and workday restrictions as well as requirements relative to the work booklet and medical exam. One industrialist, who commented on the great strides made by the textile and sulfur industries, recommended that night work (not to be allowed for boys under 15 and girls and women under 21) be defined as taking place between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., and so allowing for a system of two 8-hour shifts at which all ages above 12 could work. The work booklet he had found to be a useful tool for industry. Though he does not explain why, one can imagine that it facilitated control of the work force (282–9-Crespi).

Not that there were no dissenting voices. One Sicilian mine owner did warn that the proposed law would lead to the closure of a large number of mines, and the silk manufacturer Lodovico Gavazzi described the law as a disaster for his industry. He estimated, for example, that 19,000 of Italy’s 172,000 silk workers were under 12 (over half of these in Milan alone) and

so destined for unemployment. For Italy as a whole he asked what would happen to the 30,000–50,000 workers laid off as a result of this law.⁴⁸ Gavazzi's discussion is one of the most intriguing as he conceives of child labor in that larger context of anxiety about children's issues that characterized the period. (300–8) He evokes the fate of young Italian workers in the French glass industry (see chapter 2), the continuing presence of young Italians practicing wandering trades in London and New York (also chapter 2), and the specter of street children (chapter 5) outside the very parliament building in which the deputies are debating. These problems—child emigration and the moral abandonment of children—are according to Gavazzi among Italy's sad blights (*tristi piaghe*) and the source of juvenile delinquency (chapter 4). Would it not be better, he asks, if some Italian industrialist, whether liberal or reactionary, “even a Gavazzi,” should employ these children? And couldn't the government do a better job of protecting them if they should stay in Italy rather than migrating abroad in search of work?

Gavazzi was not alone in linking the child labor issue to that of emigration. Emigration was growing at what seemed uncontrollable rates in 1902, and Italy's second Emigration Law (see chapter 2) had just been passed by this same parliament the year before. The speaker following Gavazzi attributed Italy's massive migration to “the giant poverty of our population” and asked whether it was right by means of excessive regulation (like that proposed by the Socialists) to further impoverish families sending their children to work away from home in Italy and abroad (309–13, Sommi-Picernardi).

Another important issue raised by Gavazzi and others, especially in relation to proposals to further increase the minimum working age, was that of child morality. What, he asks, will happen to unemployed girls? “Might they not encounter individuals who will take advantage of their youth and innocence and draw them into evil?” Contrary to the Italian Committee to Fight the White Slave Trade (cited in Di San Giuliano's 1901 report) that urged the highest possible working age limit for girls in order to protect their honor, Gavazzi argued that work was the best defense a girl had and that raising the minimum working age would encourage prostitution. Also with regard to proposals to increase the working age, another deputy remarked, “I do question what good you will achieve in these small industrial centers by sending women and children out of the factories too early in the day. You will create ruffians (*ragazzacci*) who run unsupervised through the streets. Of the situation you will create for women I won't even speak; you can well imagine it” (289-Papadopolis). Gavazzi closed with the observation that workers and parents did not want this law.

The Socialists, whose proposal had been criticized by many of the interlocutors referred to here, restricted their comments to a single orator, the

reformist Angiolo Cabrini (352–68). Turati would have been the obvious choice, but he was temporarily boycotting the Chamber. Cabrini spoke at some length in favor of their proposal, the adoption of which he knew to be hopeless. He continued to argue in favor of more expansive coverage. Workshops (*laboratori*), he insisted, should be included in the law as it would then apply to the so-called schools in northern Italy where women learned the seamstress trade. According to Cabrini these were really sweatshops where girls and women worked as many as 18 to 20 hours per day for little or no pay. As noted earlier, the 1881 census had shown seamstress work to be the second most important category of nonagricultural work for women and girls. Cabrini also made pleas for nurses and shop girls. Although the Socialist proposal ultimately served little more than a rhetorical purpose, the effort did score one victory in that the law as finally approved was expanded from mines and factories to also cover workshops and the building trade. In spite of his special concern for women's work Cabrini dismissed for the time being the movement for women's liberation and closed with the comment: "Today the struggle against capitalist monopoly; tomorrow the struggle against the monopoly of men." Following comments of Di San Giuliano and a lengthy discussion of the law's articles (ministry version), it was approved by a large margin. It then made its way quickly through the Senate where it was passed in June.⁴⁹

The 1902 Law

The law as approved corresponded closely to the Di San Giuliano version (see table 3.2). The minimum working age for mining work was to increase to 14 after three years, and after 5 years women of all ages would be banned from night work.⁵⁰ The 12-hour workday was imposed for women of all ages. Industrialists were required to maintain a safe, hygienic, and moral work environment wherever children and women were employed, and violators were to be penalized with fines (but not incarceration as had been occasionally proposed). The ministry was given six months from publication of the law to draw up a new *regolamento*, and the law was to go into effect four months after publication of the latter.⁵¹ The *regolamento* was in fact approved in January 1903 and published at the end of February; setting implementation of the law for July 1.

The *regolamento* dedicated considerable space to the required medical check-up, practical expression of the concerns about racial degeneration voiced in parliament. The physician was required to carry out an accurate exam and determine that boys, girls, and minor-age women were physically able to carry out the intended work "without harming their organic

development.” Presumably to avoid compromising situations, the child or woman was to be accompanied by a relative or woman-friend during the physical exam. The government inspectors and mining engineers could at any time require a new exam and the local health officials and physicians were to periodically ascertain that workers covered by the law were neither overworked nor afflicted with contagious diseases. The *regolamento* also listed those occupations considered dangerous and unhealthy. Prominent among these were jobs that involved the handling or preparation of chemicals. Of the occupations that have emerged from our review of Italian child labor, various activities relating to match, paper, and glass manufacture were listed as well as the cleaning of lead type in print shops. Importantly, “underground hauling on head or shoulders from the point of excavation to the outdoor opening” in mines was listed which effectively would have raised the minimum age for *carusi* to 15. Contrary to the hopes of Di San Giuliano, Cabrini and others, rice farming was not included as unhealthy work.⁵²

Outside of parliament the law was generally well-received in bourgeois reformist circles. In particular, the Christian Democrats and Toniolo’s journal applauded the measure in spite of its shortcomings.⁵³ Predictably, the more laissez-faire Liberals had their reservations. The *Giornale degli Economisti*, for example, once again raised the problem of 9–12 year olds who will have finished required elementary school but not be allowed to work.⁵⁴ Several years later Attilio Cabiati writing in Einaudi’s *Riforma Sociale* was still criticizing the law for denying 9- and 10-year-old girls the—incredible to them—opportunity to earn a lira per day doing light work in the silk factories. Cabiati’s position is significant as he was a Liberal who maintained close ties with the workers’ movement and yet his position differed dramatically from a reform Socialist like Turati (Cabiati 1910).

Reaction from the workers, and the industrialists, was predictably of a different sort. In Sicily violent protests greeted the imminent application of the law in May 1903, protests which saw workers and mine owners united in their condemnation of the new measures (MAIC 1904, 19). And as had been the case in 1886, there were already requests for exemptions before the law went into effect. In response, on July 1, 1903, the very day of scheduled implementation, the ministry issued a circular allowing 12 to 15 year old *carusi* to continue working but insisted that no new boys under 15 be hired. Several exemptions relative to night work and shift length for the textile industries were also granted. Further concessions were made later in the year, some of which stretched the interpretation of the law.

Those concessions were granted by a new Labor Council created as part of the MAIC contemporary with the new legislation. This period also saw the creation of a Labor Office (also MAIC) to study labor issues. That

office's 1906 study of the law's application argued that rigorous enforcement of the new law would have created serious difficulties in certain towns and industries and so was not to have been expected.⁵⁵ Others were less generous and Toniolo's journal in 1906 described the law, praised a few years before, as "ignored and not enforced."⁵⁶

The quantity of exemptions allowed together with the disastrous situation that would be created in July 1906 when children and minor-age women who had not completed lower elementary school should by law be laid off—which might have meant a large chunk of the textile industry labor force and most *carusi*—sent legislators scurrying back to revise the apparently unenforceable 1902 law. That process began in mid-1905 and was completed with a July 1907 law modifying that of 1902. The Labor office had in the meanwhile carried out a study of *carusi* and had determined that, even though the work was considered dangerous and unhealthy, the 15 year old age limit was impractical; in part this was owing to the protests made by the sulfur-working population itself (MAIC 1904). The minister determined to return to the original limits of 13 (mechanical traction) and 14 (no mechanical traction) years of age, though the protestors had demanded 12 or even 10.

On the issue of school attendance—a 1904 law had made upper elementary school also obligatory⁵⁷—the solution chosen relative to child labor was to require completion of lower elementary school of all workers under 15 (and women under 21) and upper elementary school where those schools existed. An exception was allowed in the cases of "intellectual incapacity" and the measure was not meant to go into effect till July 1, 1910. Even that delay, however, proved inadequate, and in May 1910, for example, the prefect of Treviso reported to the minister that enforcement of the law would lead to the laying off of nearly half of the employees in some industries and might therefore cause a riot.⁵⁸ In fact the schooling requirement was again extended in 1910. In a bid to encourage factory owners to institute their own schools, the requirement could be satisfied by attending night, weekend, or private schools. The requirement was to go into effect on June 30, 1912. Signed into law in August 1910, this revision bore the signature of then Prime Minister Luigi Luzzatti, a champion of child labor legislation by that time for nearly four decades.⁵⁹

In addition to delaying enforcement, as with the school issue, the 1907 modifications introduced considerable flexibility, formalizing the granting of exemptions and in some ways vitiating the 1902 law. That law had represented Liberal Italy's earnest attempt to imitate the sort of legislation that existed in other more economically advanced Western countries. Given the realities of the Italian economic situation and the reactions to the 1902 law, it is not surprising that legislators sought to resolve the

tension between the expectation of modernization (a stricter law) and the needs of Italian industry and labor operating in a capitalist system.⁶⁰

* * *

As in other European contexts, the problem of child labor in Italy was in large part a function of the development of the industrialization of textile manufacture and the employment in textile factories of young girls (and also boys). And though we can identify expressions of alarm from as early as the 1840s, the groundswell of opinion in favor of child labor legislation dates from the 1870s, not long after national unification, and probably peaked with the passage of the 1902 law. By contrast, important debates over this issue had taken place in Britain and France—the most frequently cited models for Italian legislators—prior to the 1833 and 1841 laws passed in those countries.

Also as elsewhere the Italian laws passed were probably more significant as symptoms of the evolution of industry, the labor market, and political opinion in Italy, than as tools for repressing the exploitation of children. As we have seen, the 1886 law was initially ineffective though it came to be fairly well observed by the time a new and stricter law was passed in 1902. This latter law instead proved untenable as its enforcement would have provoked potentially violent protest on the part of the workers and stiff resistance from industry.

The child labor debate also of course illuminates other general points about Italian bourgeois and political culture of the day. It is one more index, to add to the others explored in this book, of increasing concern about working-class children. Obviously that concern was complex. For example, that opinion did sway in favor of a more humanitarian treatment of poor children does not rule out other complementary motivations. Those motivations likely included a need felt to combat the rising forces of Socialism by inculcating working-class youth with middle-class values, a strategy that required not just getting the children out of the factories but getting them into state-run schools. The debate also reinforces observations we have already made regarding the Italian syndrome of backwardness, namely the fear of Italian legislators (and others) that Italy was not keeping up with its more civilized neighbors who were further advanced—because their economies allowed it—along the path toward the abolition of child labor and the implementation of universal schooling.

Insofar as the child labor laws might have functioned as tools to repress the exploitation of children, one might ask—as much child labor literature does—whether or not those children were indeed exploited. Rather than explore the difficult question of what exactly constitutes exploitation,

however, we might instead simply ask if the children in question were better off working or not working. Certainly the lives of *carusi*, beating-machine girls, and other children working in industry were hard. Yet some of the sources reviewed suggest that *carusi* were disciplined much as were other poor Sicilian children of the day, namely with beatings. And the relatively high wages they received may indeed have raised the standard of living of families surviving at or near subsistence level. Similarly girls in the textile mills may well have eaten better than the chronically malnourished youth of rural Italy; nutritional diseases like pellagra, for example, afflicted rural populations, and it was in the more industrialized regions where, for example, it declined earliest.⁶¹ The violent reactions of working-class families to child labor legislation, from Sicily to Treviso, suggests that these families did indeed depend on their children's wages to make ends meet. As with child labor in other times and places the real problem was not so much the failure to regulate the work of children, but the grinding poverty that made sending children into factories a desirable alternative for families. Probably much as in England or France during the first decades of the nineteenth century, the combination of higher adult wages, generally available schooling, and a working-class perception of the value of that schooling (based undoubtedly on a real evaluation of the economic advantages it brought) had still not in the closing decades of the century conspired to shift much of Italian child labor out of industry and mines. In time of course it did.

As with foundling care and child emigration, study of the child labor issue in Italy leads us to focus on the turn of the century. The year after Italy's imperial ambitions were dashed in Ethiopia saw not only outrage over both scandalous foundling mortality in Naples and scandalous working conditions for Italian children in French glass factories, but also initiation of parliamentary debate over the Child Labor Law of 1902. The year 1902 also witnessed the important Paris conference on the white slave trade, while the Italian Emigration Law that included articles on child migration for wandering trades, dangerous work, and prostitution came one year before. All are indices that Italian society was devoting a new level of attention to children's issues, and of a new attitude about the role the state and society should take in providing succor for Italy's marginalized youth.

The chapters that follow explore how that state and society sought to cope with several other categories of marginalized Italian youth: criminals, vagabonds, idlers, beggars, prostitutes again, and "materially and morally abandoned" youth. As we see below, it was predictably the state that sought to deal with explicitly criminal behavior while the task of saving those children threatened with lives of vice and urban dangers was largely taken up by private initiative, and again in just the period that we have identified as the peak of Liberal Italy's child anxiety.

Children behind Bars: Reformatories and Juvenile Delinquency

Bosco Marengo

As far as reformatory life went, Amilcare Mariani, an 18 year-old from Rome, had things pretty well figured out. He was an operator. Probably transferred from the more rigorous and prison-like La Generala in Turin he was, in late 1897, a privileged inmate at the recently opened reformatory for idle and vagabond youth at Bosco Marengo in the Piedmontese countryside. Described as intelligent, reasonably well educated and an enemy of work, Mariani had managed to avoid the usual assignment to either of the reformatory workshops, one a book bindery and the other a cobbler's shop. Instead he acted as an assistant to both the music master and the writing instructor and was also one of several boys assigned the light task of working in the infirmary. His troubles began when a new director arrived at Bosco Marengo. The new administrator was distressed by the old-fashioned sort of discipline used at the institute, an excess of bars, locked gates and the like, and the failure to implement the new pedagogic techniques. He was also, however, concerned about a bad element—"of a perverse nature"—imported from La Generala, one that constituted a constant threat to discipline. Several of those boys had in fact attempted an escape during one of the regular summer-time walking excursions in the hills surrounding the reformatory. But that element found fuller expression in Mariani who, according to the director's report, was caught performing impure acts with another inmate in the infirmary. Indeed he was accused of forcing himself on the other boy (who was confined to the infirmary for an undisclosed reason).

Mariani was severely punished. Corporal punishment by this time was not the norm, and so an enlightened and progressive director probably resorted to solitary confinement and a diet of bread and water or broth relieved every couple of days by a bit of more nutritious fare. Moreover, all the boys working in the infirmary were reassigned to the regular work detail. Mariani was determined to get revenge on the director, once his punishment was completed, by carrying out an escape. He planned the escape with two other inmates, Pietro Risso, a 20-year-old from Savona, and Francesco Sella (no details given). Risso worked in the bindery and was able to procure there a length of rope that the chief binder absent-mindedly left lying on top of a cabinet. In order to circumvent the inspections that took place every day as the boys left the workshops, Risso placed the rope on the sill of a window that communicated between the bindery and a hall way. In the general confusion of inmates leaving for the day (both workshops), the hall way was full of inmates and Risso was able to retrieve the rope unobserved. He then gave the rope to Mariani who hid it till the evening of January 14—it must have been cold—when all three were together in the fifth squadron.

Sella left first to use the bathroom that was located in a small tower built into the wall that divided the guarded squadron area from the reformatory garden. Once there he easily removed a metal screen loosely covering the bathroom window and with the help of the rope let himself down into the garden. He was soon joined by Mariani and Risso; the inattentive squadron guard failed for a time to notice the absence of all three. At the other side of the garden was the external wall of the reformatory. The trio stacked up several boxes and a wheel barrow and so were able to clamber up on to the wall. Risso again went first and made a daring 8-meter jump to the ground. Mariani managed to navigate a portion of the wall to a point where the drop was not so great. Sella instead lost heart and remained in the garden where he was later found.

About 15 minutes after the escape the other inmates of the fifth squadron were sent to their cells for the night at which time the absence of Mariani, Risso, and Sella was detected. Guards were immediately sent out in search of them and authorities in the surrounding territory alerted. Mariani and Risso escaped immediate detection but on the next day were apprehended by the *carabinieri* in nearby Capriata Orba (about 10 km away). Mariani had with him a map of the area, apparently stolen from a desk some months before. Following capture, the Bosco Marengo director recommended to the director general of prisons in Rome that the group be reassigned to the Tivoli Riformatorio di rigore, including Sella who, though less courageous, was judged perhaps the most evil (*cattivo*) of the group. Tivoli, where they would be subject to harsher discipline, was for

more delinquent/difficult cases, and the transfer would also serve to rid Bosco Marengo of some of its more corrupting elements.¹

The story of Mariani and the others illustrates a number of developments central to our study of juvenile delinquency and its management in Liberal Italy. As with the other children's issues we have looked at, the 1890s was also a decade characterized by heightened attention to child crime and behavior generally perceived as pre-criminal: disobedience to parents, wandering the streets, begging, and the like. In response to the rising numbers of incarcerated children—the numbers are reviewed below—and rising concern about the corruption of children once they were institutionally confined, the state was determined to not only to make greater efforts to segregate minors from adults, but also, in 1891, to segregate the various categories of child inmates. Bosco Marengo, for idlers and vagabonds, fell in some sense between the institutes for paternal correction cases and those for children who had actually been convicted of criminal activity; these institutes are more fully described below. The adult/child divide is of course problematic, and majority in Italy at the time was defined as age 21 and so we find 18 and 20 year-old “children” like Mariani and Risso in institutions that also housed 9 and 10 year olds. Many believed that the 18 to 20 year-olds should be reclassified as adults or in any case kept away from the real children because of their potentially corrupting influence; the 1912 Minors Code in fact sought to redefine majority as starting at age 18. That corruption of course also included sexual corruption and if Mariani did in fact rape a younger boy then he represented exactly the fear of homosexual abuse often expressed by experts on the issues of juvenile delinquency. By the late 1890s the transition from dormitory to cellular sleeping arrangements was well underway, as the situation in Bosco Marengo suggests, and one of the primary motivations for that transition was to prevent homosexual behavior, whether forced or voluntary. We also see in the new Bosco Marengo director's objections to prison-like conditions and harsh punishment the by then widespread belief that minor-age delinquents could be reformed if treated well, surrounded by a nonthreatening atmosphere, and subjected to the new pedagogical approach. The reformatories' traditional personnel, essentially prison guards, were at this time being reformed and replaced, often by school teachers.

The era of greatest concern about child crime in Liberal Italy stretches from the new prison and reformatory norms of 1891 to the Minors Code of 1912. This latter expression of Giolittian reformatory zeal, like the legislation on materially and morally abandoned children of a few years before, ultimately came to naught and signaled the eclipse of the Liberal season of child anxiety. Before getting to that period, however, we need to consider some of the earlier context in Italy and elsewhere in the West.

The History of Prisons

The history of reformatories and juvenile delinquency is of course part of the larger history of crime and punishment in the West. A couple of key developments in that larger history are particularly relevant to a discussion of reformatories and juvenile delinquency in Liberal Italy. The most important of these developments was probably a move from low-cost, immediate, and arguably cruel punishment to longer-term and more humane punishment requiring considerable investment by the state. Leaving aside the seemingly universal practice of exacting monetary fines for minor infractions, traditional punishments were often imposed directly on the offender's body—execution, torture, disfigurement, dismemberment—or else his liberty was compromised in a permanent way by means of enslavement or transportation. The practice of exposing the offender to public ridicule (in stocks, in a cage) or by means of an outward sign (Hester Prynne's scarlet letter), constitutes yet another category. These various punishments, some of them perceived today as characteristic of a more barbarous era, have come to be almost entirely replaced by incarceration. Ostensibly representing a more scientific and humane approach to crime, various authors have also argued that the move to incarceration owed much to the development of a capitalist industrial economy needing to impose wage discipline.²

Foucault, Ignatieff, and others have focused on the evolution from ritual punishments of the body to private punishments of the mind (or soul) between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Foucault sees this as a transition from punishment (torture, execution) as an expression of princely power, which must necessarily exceed that of the punished, to punishment (incarceration) as a means to reintegrate or reform a deviant element of the social body. In particular, that transition entailed a change of emphasis from blood crimes to crimes against (bourgeois) property and the substitution of insistence on the universal acceptance of a productive role in the new industrial economy for the "tolerated illegalities" of the *ancien régime*; it marked a new economy of power (Foucault 1977). Using different language but coming to similar conclusions, Ignatieff associates the move from bodily punishments to incarceration and the general tightening of social controls between about 1770 and 1840 as a response to the breakdown of paternalism and an attempt to reestablish order in a socially and economically transformed age; it was a way to impose discipline on an "aggregate of masterless urban populations" (Ignatieff 1978).

For our purposes, it is interesting to note that several of the key features in these transitions occurred first in relation to the punishment of children. Indeed, questions of what constituted a criminal offence and how to

punish that offence had long held special meaning in the case of children. In what may have been one of the earliest steps in the evolution of punishment in post-Classical Europe, the tenth-century law of Aethelstan stipulated that juvenile thieves be imprisoned because the king thought it cruel to put such young people to death (Harding et al. 1985, 7). In the long and at times specious debate over whether or not there existed a distinct concept of childhood prior to, say, the eighteenth century, the law of Aethelstan suggests that, at least in medieval England, children were viewed differently from adults in significant ways and their childhood was a mitigating factor in criminal culpability. It also suggests that a fundamental development in the history of punishment may owe a great deal to the special case of young offenders. For although imprisonment was already used as a form of punishment at the time of Aethelstan, it was by no means the norm and other corporal alternatives were generally preferred.

Imprisonment instead was primarily used to hold the accused until they could be tried and only became a standard form of punishment for certain offenses much later, when Aethelstan's less cruel practice with regard to children came to be generalized for offenders of all ages. The endpoint of that evolution is the modern Western penitentiary which emerges in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, though the transition from corporal to carceral punishment was not such a linear one. For the penitentiary traces its origins not so much to crime and its punishment as to poverty and begging. In particular, the late sixteenth century witnessed a general move to institutionalize poverty, the "Bridewells" of England for example and the *ospedali* of various Italian states. These institutions were originally intended to house certain categories of the poor. In some cases the "undeserving" poor were institutionalized and put to work; in others the sick and destitute (or simply the out of work) found a degree of assistance. In all cases the intent was to reduce begging and where possible turn paupers into productive members of society. With time, these institutions would come to incorporate penitentiary as well as poorhouse functions and so serve to hold accused criminals, political and religious prisoners, and debtors (Harding et al. 1985; Melossi and Pavarini 1981).

Penitentiary punishment came into its own at the end of the eighteenth century, in Jacques-Guy Petit's words "an invention of our modernity."³ In response to the criticism of capital and corporal punishments advanced by Cesare Beccaria and other reformers, England, France, and other European states moved to penal incarceration. England, for example, passed the Penitentiary Act in 1779 and engaged in a spate of prison building in the 1780s. The Grand Duchy of Tuscany significantly eliminated capital punishment and torture in 1786. French enthusiasm for the new ideas regarding punishment found expression first in the Revolutionary penal code

of 1791 and then in the Napoleonic codes and prisons of the subsequent decades.

The new prisons created new problems or at least made old ones seem more acute. Life in jail or prison for the young offender was fraught with dangers. Prey to older children and adults he (or she) was a likely victim of theft, sexual abuse, and general moral corruption. And whereas in the time of Aethelstan, prison may have seemed a less cruel punishment for children than execution, as penal incarceration became the norm for nearly all serious offenders, concern about the very fact of incarcerated children took on special urgency. For children too found their way into the new prisons and as more and more criminals were incarcerated, a larger population of young offenders found themselves in the company of hardened adult criminals.

Moreover, the penitentiary movement of the eighteenth century also ignited debate over the aims of punishment versus reform. Should prison sentences correspond to the crime committed and act as a deterrent to other potential criminals or should they instead serve a correctional function and aim at returning the offender to the ranks of law-abiding citizens? As with the general move to incarceration, concern about children spearheaded the debate over reform. Just as it had been imagined that the able-bodied and undeserving poor could be reformed and turned into industrious citizens by means of the workhouse, so it came to be hoped that the young criminal in particular, his descent into lawlessness halted at a tender age, could be reformed by means of institutionalization. How, though, to achieve that goal in a penitentiary where the child regularly trafficked with murderers, prostitutes, thieves, political dissidents, and the like? Hence the need to segregate children from corrupting influences emerged as a major force behind the reformatory movement of the nineteenth century.

The History of Reformatories

That movement would eventually culminate in institutions intended exclusively for minor-age individuals serving sentences linked to a criminal conviction, but as with adult penitentiaries those institutions evolved from workhouses or hospitals and so the reformatory in its history served a number of purposes. As explored in other chapters, state and local administrations as well as religious orders had been institutionalizing children from at least the fourteenth century and it is out of this tradition that the reformatory evolved. Institutions existed for foundlings and for orphans, and there were also institutes or conservatories for girls in danger of falling (or

already fallen) into moral danger. And of course poor children, with or without parents, might end up in the poor- or workhouses.

This institutional world was not one defined by rigid boundaries. Beyond the obvious and frequent “trespassing” of legitimate or parented children in foundling homes and orphanages, the institutions created could not always accommodate their intended populations. And so we find, for example: Neapolitan foundlings kept in the *Albergo dei Poveri*, a sort of hospital (or prison) for mendicants; “deflowered” girls in institutes intended only for virgins; unruly children committed by their parents to the authorities for “correction” ending up in judiciary prisons; and orphans, for lack of an orphanage, classified as vagabonds and sent to a reformatory. We need to imagine a world of poor, needy children in flux, some finding, or being forced into, institutional situations and others spilling over into the relatively uncontrolled and usually urban spaces outside the doors of those institutions.⁴ The nineteenth century would witness important developments in this regard as those institutions expanded and proliferated and crowds of marginalized and uncontrolled youth came under ever greater scrutiny and regulation.

In some sense the reformatory first appeared in Italy though those examples had a limited impact on the nineteenth-century movement of interest to us here. In the mid-seventeenth century a home for male street children—vagabonds, beggars, boys abandoned to their own devices—was founded in Florence, the Hospice of San Filippo Neri. It was apparently successful in noticeably reducing urban crime. A confirmation of the permeable nature of institutional boundaries, the Florentine institute came to house not only beggars and vagabonds but also boys convicted of various crimes (Sellin 1929). A half century later, in 1704, Pope Clement XI founded a House of Correction for Boys in the Hospice of San Michele in Rome. This institute also began not by taking in child criminals but instead unruly boys consigned by their fathers (who were expected to pay for the children’s upkeep and could withdraw them from the institution by a simple request). By the late eighteenth century San Michele was also taking in boys convicted of crimes. The boys’ section was closed in 1827 only to be reopened in 1904 (Sellin 1930).

Not surprisingly, the initiative for reformatory movements in the early nineteenth century came from the major powers of France and Great Britain. The synchronicity of developments in the two countries is remarkable. In part it can be ascribed to imitation, but it must also be the case that French and British societies were responding to similar “modernizing” impulses. Population growth and industrialization meant that more poor children were to be found on more city streets, children potentially disruptive to the economic and public order (as thieves, beggars, and

vagabonds). Moreover, it is in the early nineteenth century that the Enlightenment/Romantic ideal of childhood gained general sway (Cunningham 1995, 61–78). According to that ideal, childhood was a time of innocence to be protected from the harsher realities of the outside world. Consistent with such an ideal, the child offender likely failed to distinguish right from wrong and so needed not punishment but education and reform.

The reformatory system in England traces its roots to Robert Young's founding of the Philanthropic Society in 1788 and the creation of homes for the children of convicted criminals. That society would be instrumental in calling for a separate sort of treatment for young offenders and for setting up early reformatories (Hinde 1951, 95–6). In France, the Revolutionary penal code of 1791 (and the Napoleonic one that would follow it) stipulated that children under the age of 16 convicted of criminal offenses might be (and the vast majority would be) acquitted for a failure to comprehend the nature of their crime (a lack of *discernement*; the same distinction would be used in Italian law) but still remain under the authority of the court (and so potentially institutionalized). The code further called for separate quarters within the existing prisons for minors or else entirely separate *maisons de corrections*. Results were not immediate and only by the 1830s was a degree of separation achieved (Petit 1990, 283).

The year 1838 witnessed important reformatory developments on both sides of the Channel. In Britain, following a number of private initiatives including houses of refuge and farm colonies (Hinde 1951, 96), parliament instructed that boys under the age of 18 convicted of crimes, more and more of whom were being sent to conventional prisons, should be sent to the Parkhurst Military Hospital for a reformatory regime of several years prior to receiving the usual punishment of transportation (to Oceania by this time, though some Parkhurst releases went into apprenticeships in Britain administered by the Philanthropic Society) (Forsythe 1987, 123–6). That very same year saw the foundation of La Petite-Roquette in France. La Roquette, like Parkhurst, was basically a penitentiary for children (ages 6–16), though one with a particularly harsh regime: total cellular confinement in silence and isolation (the so-called Philadelphia system) combined with religious instruction and constant occupation (i.e. labor). La Roquette would soon fall into disfavor, largely because of the high mortality suffered by its inmates (O'Brien 1982, 125–6). More successful, and influential, was Le Mettray, an agricultural colony founded one year later in 1839. Initially a private institution, Le Mettray took in children under 16 who had been acquitted for lack of *discernement*. Living quarters were communal and the boys, in addition to receiving instruction, engaged in agricultural labor. Le Mettray would long be the model for

similar colonies in Europe and the United States. Supported by private donations, it also received a per diem payment from the state for each charge.

The Mettray system became the standard form of child incarceration in France as a result of legislation passed in 1850 (by which time there were 12 such colonies in the country). That law, passed shortly after creation of the Second Republic, reflected the view of President Louis Napoleon and others that delinquent children had to be removed from the corrupting city to more wholesome rural surroundings (O'Brien 1982, 134). Three categories of children (under the age of 16) were to be sent to the agricultural colonies: those convicted of crimes carrying sentences of 6 months to 2 years (with *discernement*), those committing crimes but acquitted for lack of *discernement*, and children subject to "paternal correction." According to paternal correction (which we have already encountered in papal Rome and which would subsequently figure in Italian law), the head of a household (usually the father) could request that his unruly child be incarcerated (and then would pay a maintenance fee during the period of incarceration).⁵ Insofar as these colonies were meant to exercise an educational and reformatory influence, children had to be kept there long enough to achieve that end; the minimum stay was two years and the maximum five (possibly for a crime carrying a two-week sentence for adults). The French law of 1850 also created *maisons penitenciaires* for girls (all categories). These *maisons* sought to prepare errant girls for domestic service, marriage, and motherhood. The initial public intent of the law was soon replaced by a reality of private, convent-like institutions run by nuns, very much in the centuries-old tradition of girls' conservatories (O'Brien 1982, 139–44).

There was also a great deal of activity relative to juvenile crime in Britain at mid-century. Both houses of parliament created committees to study the problem in 1847 which culminated in the Youth Offenders Act of 1854. That act in turn led to the creation in 1857 of industrial schools and reformatories. The industrial schools were intended for vagrant children aged 7–14; and several other categories were subsequently added: beggars, wandering children, children in the company of thieves, children under 12 guilty of crimes punishable by imprisonment, and children whose parents declared them beyond their control (an obvious parallel to continental paternal correction). Like many of these institutions, the industrial schools began as private initiatives receiving a degree of state funding and subject to official inspection. While the industrial schools were meant to be generally educational, the stricter reformatories dealt with more serious cases. They were intended for children under 16 convicted of crimes carrying prison sentences of 10 or more days (except for the under 12s sent to the industrial schools). Like Le Mettray the periods spent in the reformatories ranged

from a minimum of two years to a maximum of five. The reformatories seem to have rendered Parkhurst redundant; it closed in 1865 (Harding et al. 1985, 242; Hinde 1951, 103–5). All of these developments were of course watched with interest by reformers in the various Italian states and would serve as the context for developments there.

Prisons and Reformatories in Italy

The history of prison reform in Italy resembles that described above for England and France except that parallel developments generally occurred a few decades later, and prior to 1860 reform was uncoordinated and carried out by a host of independent states.⁶ The most important developments predictably occurred in the more advanced regions of Piedmont, Lombardy, and Tuscany. The first modern Italian penitentiary incorporating cellular confinement and a work regime, for example, was that built in Austrian-ruled Milan in the 1760s; notably it included a number of cells specifically for children and for women (Melossi and Pavarini 1981, 73). Leaving aside this isolated development, however, the general move to penal incarceration only began in the late 1830s, in the Kingdom of Sardinia (Piedmont and Sardinia) and in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Specifically, the Sardinian penal code of 1839 imposed prison sentences as the principal form of criminal punishment which led to the construction of new prisons (two were completed by 1850); while in Florence the move to penal reform also began about this time, and a new prison was built in the 1840s. Important reforms were subsequently introduced as part of the Tuscan penal code of 1853 (including re-elimination of the death penalty) (Carrafiello 1998, 13–15; Davis 1988, 128–9; Melossi and Pavarini 1981, 85–7).

The reformatory movement in Italy coincided more or less with the penitentiary one and we find important developments occurring more or less contemporaneously in Italy, France, and the United Kingdom.⁷ The Sardinian penal code (1839), for example, called for separate institutions for minors and for women in the same year the agricultural colony of Le Mettray was founded in France (and so one year after creation of the Parkhurst reformatory in England). Clearly the Piedmontese ruling elite, arguably the most cosmopolitan in Italy, had these foreign examples in mind.⁸ There followed a spate of new institutions for minors throughout the peninsula including the Manini in Cremona (1838), Santa Maria della Pace (1841) and the Patronato (1845) in Milan, La Generala in Turin (1845), the Casa di custodia in Naples (1849), and Santa Balbina in Rome (1853). These institutions generally housed paternal correction cases together with minor-age vagabonds, beggars, and criminals. Several of

them (La Generala, Naples, Santa Balbina) would evolve into Italian state reformatories following unification.

Although not the focus of the current study, the period, centering on the 1840s, was a crucial one for public anxiety or concern about poor children occupying public spaces. Those spaces included streets, courtyards, and public houses and stood in contrast to other institutional ones that bourgeois opinion had come to recognize as appropriate, namely schools, the family home, the farm, and (at least for a time) the factory or workshop. Street children instead occupied unregulated urban space at a time when that space was both expanding and coming more and more under an industrial regime. Cities then were emerging as centers of industrial production, a modernizing force that brought with it frightening changes. They were also centers of political agitation and revolution, activities which might well involve children. One has only to recall Delacroix's 1830 "Liberty leading the people" in which a young boy brandishing two pistols flanks Liberty herself to conjure up a potent image of revolutionary children. A general bourgeois perception then of the threat posed by poor children surely helps to explain the coincident developments in the 1840s of both the reformatory for unruly youth over the age of about nine and the *crèche* or *asilo* (discussed in chapter 5) for their younger brothers and sisters.

And yet the majority of children, a vast majority in the Italian case, did not occupy that dangerous urban space but continued instead to live in a rural world. And in that rural world the quantity of juvenile suffering surely outweighed anything to be encountered in the cities. That suffering, however, garnered less attention because it occurred in a traditional and familiar setting, not a new, changing, and frightening one. Nor did rural youth appear to threaten the social order in the way that unregulated poor urban children did. Just as we have seen in other cases, for example that of child labor, the rural and agricultural world of children did not inspire the same sort of anxiety that the urban and industrial one did.

Following Italian unification, child incarceration was only one of a host of bewildering issues that faced the new kingdom. Each pre-unification state of course had its own laws and its own institutions; and making them conform to a uniform Italian model would be a slow and painful process. With regard to crime, the Sardinian code of 1859 was adopted (replacing that of 1839 referred to above), though with some regional variations and a uniform criminal code was introduced only in 1889. Moreover, the problem of child correction was not simply a criminal one but involved the civil code and public security laws as well. Ultimately three or four categories of minor-age reformatory inmates were identified, and the meaning of reformatory itself changed over time. As it turns out, the attempts to segregate the several groups were never entirely successful.

With regard to the punishment of minors, the Sardinian/Italian criminal code of 1859 was nearly identical to the Sardinian code of 1839 and followed the French model. The relevant articles were then transcribed to the Zanardelli code of 1889 with a few important changes. Although not contemplated in the earlier codes, the 1889 code considered child offenders under the age of 9 as incapable of distinguishing right from wrong; they were ideally returned to their parents and the parents admonished to better attend to their “upbringing”⁹ (or possibly face a fine). In more serious cases, though, even under 9 year-olds might be sent to a reformatory. For children between the ages of 9 and 14, it was up to the judge to determine whether or not the child acted with *discernimento* (that is the ability to discern right from wrong). In the case of crimes committed without *discernimento*, the child was “acquitted” and the court could either return the child to his/her parents or else send him/her to a reformatory. Crimes committed by 9–14 year olds with *discernimento* were instead necessarily punished with correctional detention, usually in a jail, though sentences were reduced as compared to adults; crimes carrying *ergastolo* (life imprisonment and hard labor) sentences, for example, instead received 6–15 years of imprisonment for this age group. Children over the age of 14 were always considered to act with *discernimento* (according to the code) and also received sentences reduced in degree; 12–20 years instead of *ergastolo* for 14 to 18 year-olds and 25–30 years for 18 to 21 year-olds. At 21 individuals reached majority and became fully responsible for their actions. Correctional administrators, in fact, wrestled at length over where to send which age group and how to deal with convicted as opposed to “acquitted” 9–14 year olds.¹⁰

In addition to child criminals, two other categories of children were incarcerated. Shortly after unification, the new civil code of 1865 formalized the institution of paternal correction. Parents unable to control their unruly children could request that the court confine that child to a reformatory. The parents were then required to pay a fee though apparently they rarely did so.¹¹ Secondly, vagabondage and begging had been generally criminalized from at least Napoleonic times, and according to the Public Security Law of 1889, idle, vagabond, and notorious children under the age of 18, a group I am referring to generally as street children, were to be reconsigned to their parents or else, should they be parentless or their parents deemed unfit, sent either to a foster home (rarely accomplished) or to a reformatory.¹² Though not specifically named, this group also included child beggars and prostitutes.

I have used the term reformatory loosely though it came to mean specific things at specific times and at any given moment there was more than one type. In the context of the 1859 code (and the provisions regarding vagabonds and *correzione paterna*), the unified state used, in addition to

jails and prisons, two institutions for the incarceration of children: state-run *case di custodia* (as they were then called) and private reformatories. Initially there were five *case di custodia*, most founded in the pre-unification period: La Generala for boys and L'Ergastolo for girls,¹³ both in Turin; L'Ambrogiana (founded 1864) with separate sections for boys and girls in Montelupo (near Florence); and the *Casa maschile* (boys) in Naples. Except for La Generala with a capacity of about 300, these were relatively small institutions ranging in size from 15 to 70 inmates; in all, their total post-unification population was about 450 (of which the girls at L'Ergastolo and L'Ambrogiana amounted to only about 40) (Ministero dell'Interno 1866).

The private reformatories instead numbered 22 in the early 1860s and housed about 800 children between the ages of 7 and 18 (Ministero dell'Interno 1866). The private reformatories were of various sorts. Some were orphanages, girls' conservatories, and other sorts of children's institutions that also took in government-subsidized reformatory cases. Some existed exclusively for these cases. Almost all were run by religious orders of some sort. Their existence attests, as do other examples in other areas of public assistance, to the sort of cooperation dictated by social need between the otherwise hostile lay state and Catholic world. Some private reformatories refused state recognition as a charitable work (*opera pia*) and so the combination of state support and scrutiny that came with that recognition. Lay reformers argued that these institutes should be required to accept that status and so be subject to government inspections. As it turned out, the issue of state inspection of private institutions remained a sensitive one for decades as private reformatories generally succeeded in staving off what they perceived as excessive government interference.¹⁴ They were also frequently recognized as more effective than the state-run reformatories, though just as often that effectiveness was attributed to the different assignment practices used for private versus government reformatories.¹⁵

The 1870s saw the addition of four more *case di custodia*: Santa Balbina in Rome (1871, following the addition of the Papal State to the kingdom), Bologna (1877, formerly a private reformatory), Tivoli (1879, outside Rome), and Perugia (1875) which replaced L'Ambrogiana for girls.¹⁶ The roster of private reformatories predictably fluctuated more freely (responding in part to the "market" in child delinquency). Generally speaking the less serious cases (paternal correction, milder crimes committed without *discernimento*) were sent to private reformatories, the more serious ones to *case di custodia*, and the most serious ones to jail or prison. Nonetheless, there was no careful distinction made at the time between the various categories, and the destinations of incarcerated youth likely owed as much to the availability of space as to any other consideration (Ministero dell'Interno 1866; 1880).

In fact, what hints we do have reveal children in almost all corners of the Italian post-unification carceral world. To begin with children arrested for criminal offences were not normally sent directly to a reformatory, which might in any case be far away; there were, for example, no state-run reformatories in Sicily, Sardinia, or on the mainland South of Naples till the twentieth century. Instead the accused were often sent to the judicial jails (*carceri giudiziarie*) which served also to hold accused adults awaiting trial. The 1861 norms for these jails required that detainees under the age of 14 be separated from adults and made similar requirements for paternal correction cases as some of these too ended up there.¹⁷ These norms, however, seem to have been little respected. Federico Bellazzi, a parliamentary deputy, noted in 1866 that the judicial jail in Bari was a scene of complete promiscuity of ages, sexes, and morality. The need for age (and sex) segregation responded of course to the desire to prevent the corruption of younger detainees by older ones, corruption that certainly included sexual abuse (to which we shall return). Bellazzi counted 214 boys and 31 girls (“adolescents,” apparently under 16) in the judicial jails (Bellazzi 1866, 37–47).

A look at official statistics from 1871 reveals that the *case di custodia* population had grown to about 700 boys and 70 girls while the private reformatories housed another 2000 boys and 400 girls. Those aged 16 and under and sent to the judicial jails that year instead numbered about 4400 boys and 800 girls; most of these must have had rather short stays (an indeterminate but relatively high percentage were held in preventive custody while awaiting trial) as the year-end population for this age group was 722 boys and 69 girls (about three times Bellazzi’s total of five years before). The more serious offenders aged 20 years and under instead included 118 convicts in the penal settlements (*bagni*), presumably all males, 573 more in the men’s prisons and 20 in the women’s. Twenty-four years later (1895), and so just after the initiation of important reforms, the minor-age prison population seems to have been about halved—there were 301 16–18-year-old boys and 5 girls in conventional prisons as well as one boy under 16—and that of the judicial jails instead more than tripled (nearly 2000 16–18 year olds and nearly 1000 under 16-years-olds at that date, about 5 percent of whom were girls). Reformatory populations meanwhile had doubled by then, to about 1500 in government institutions and about 5000 in private ones.¹⁸

Early Reforms

The period to which these statistics refer, between unification and 1895, saw two important legislative developments relative to reformatories, namely the sets of norms promulgated in 1877 and 1891. The 1877 norms

primarily served to formalize practices as they had evolved to that date. According to them, minors serving criminal sentences should go to *case di custodia*.¹⁹ The *case di custodia* were to depend on a work regime and strict discipline, and their primary aim was the reform and moral education of the inmates. The 1877 norms envisioned both urban and rural *case di custodia*, the latter to be agricultural colonies like Le Mettray. They also referred to the establishment of these institutions on some of Italy's uninhabited islands for the more difficult and recalcitrant children. Neither the agricultural nor island reformatories ever came into existence. The norms furthermore insisted on night-time segregation of inmates (to prevent impure acts) or, should that segregation be impossible, the illumination and careful observation of common dormitories. The *case di custodia* were also to impose a system of rewards and punishments; the most severe punishments contemplated were cellular isolation on bread and water for up to 8 days and transfer to the planned island reformatories. Finally they called for the strict separation of minors convicted of crimes from other categories.²⁰ As it turned out, contrary to these stated intentions, the small number of *case di custodia* housed mostly vagabonds and paternal correction cases while minor-age convicts generally went to (adult) judicial jails.

That state of affairs was more explicitly recognized in the revised norms of 1891 which covered both prisons and reformatories and came on the heels of the new penal code as well as the 1889 Public Security Law that included provisions for idle and vagabond youth.²¹ With regard to minors, the norms stipulated that all inmates under the age of 18 in the judicial jails were to be segregated from the adult prisoners, an increase from age 14 as compared to the 1861 norms. Ideally, however, 9–18 year olds convicted of crimes (with *discernimento*) were to go to the new *case di correzione* (as opposed to *custodia*). As it developed, only one of these was established, in Urbino, and so fell short of accommodating the intended population, most of which still went to the judicial jails. A few years later an institute for the “truly incorrigible” was also established in Forlì; and it too came to house exclusively convicted minors. The former *case di custodia* were instead renamed Government Reformatories,²² and these reformatories were to be divided into three categories (each with its own name): one for paternal correction cases or *discoli* (*Istituto di correzione paterna*); one for idle and vagabond youth (*Istituto di educazione correzionale per oziosi, vagabondi, e diffamati*) like that at Bosco Marengo; and one for delinquents under the age of 9 and 9 to 14 year-olds convicted without *discernimento* (*Istituto di educazione e di correzione*). The more difficult cases among the various categories of reformatory youth were sent to special *sezioni di rigore* established within the various reformatories, like the one at Tivoli where Amilcare Mariani was sent, or else to La Generala in Turin (later and

still today named the Riformatorio “Ferrante Aporti” after the founder of the Italian *asilo* movement—see chapter 5).²³

A number of reports suggest that by the turn of the century the tripartite reformatory distinction was generally respected for boys. For girls instead the state had less control. As the statistics reveal, a relatively small number of girls, usually the toughest cases (most serious crimes committed, girls hardest to discipline), went to the state-run reformatory. The rest, a large majority of judicially mandated incarcerated girls, went to private reformatories operated by nuns. These institutes were little affected by the 1891 norms and no effort was made to separate the delinquent (convicted of a crime) from the vagabond from the *discola* (unruly girl) (Morici 1899a; Rossana 1909a; Rossana 1909b).

The different treatment of boys as compared to girls revealed the gendered nature of Italian administrators’ response to the problem of juvenile delinquency. For the boys the intent was clearly to get as many of them as possible into state as opposed to private institutions. For the girls instead, there was no such urgency, especially after 1910 when the Perugia reformatory was closed and all girls went to private institutions (Doria 1910e, 327). On the one hand, administrators were adjusting to a preexisting situation. Largely because of concern about morality (virginity, prostitution), there had always been far more private and religious institutions for girls than boys; indeed one occasionally encounters laments about the need for more space to assist boys. It made economic sense then to use the existing network for girls. On the other hand, while there was clearly a need felt by administrators and legislators to socialize/reform errant boys in a lay environment controlled by the state, there was less concern among the same lay administrators about abandoning girls to traditional Catholic influence (and so placing them in an environment likely hostile to the unified state). This dual logic makes perfect sense (and not just economic sense) when we recall that the girls were being prepared to enter a domestic world (as wives and servants) while the boys, even given the limited Italian suffrage at the time, would, as future workers, engage in the public and political world.

“Frightening Proportions”

By the 1880s it had become something of a commonplace that Italy enjoyed a “sad primacy” among European nations in crime (Davis 1988, 314–16). Nonetheless, Martino Beltrani-Scalia (1828–1909), penal specialist and director general of prisons for most of the period 1879–1898, could still write in 1879: “I am happy to report that the scale of juvenile crime in Italy

is small and reassuring.”²⁴ His optimistic assessment did not last, however, and the late 1890s to 1900s saw a crescendo of concern about juvenile delinquency. Indeed 18 years later, in 1897, Beltrani-Scalia himself had completely revised his view and cited instead a general “cry of alarm” sounded in reaction to the rapid increase of delinquency among minors in Italy, as in other nations. That cry would only grow louder as virtually all subsequent discussions of minor-age crime over the next decade referred to a worsening of the problem. In 1909, for example, Vittorio Orlando, then minister of justice, described the “frightening proportions” juvenile delinquency had assumed in recent years (Orlando 1909). Comments like Orlando’s indeed became so frequent that some commentators referred to juvenile delinquency as a “fashionable” topic (Giorgianni 1910; Rossana 1910). Orlando’s remark in fact prefaced the creation of a parliamentary commission to study the problem.²⁵ According to Alessandro Doria, Beltrani-Scalia’s successor as director general of prisons, by 1910 the issue of reformatories and correctional education was “of great interest, the importance of which has impressed itself upon the public consciousness as one of the greatest problems facing legislators and statesmen” (Doria 1910e).

This period is of course the crucial one for our study. Beltrani-Scalia’s 1897 comment coincided with the reestablishment of the Interior Ministry’s General Directory of Prisons and Reformatories (headed by him) which had been eliminated in response to the budget crisis of the early 1890s. It was also the year that the Annunziata scandal broke out, eventually leading to the proposed Law on Materially and Morally Abandoned Infancy of 1907 (see chapters 1 and 5). By 1909, when the Committee on Delinquency was created, the grassroots save the children movement was in full swing, a potentially enforceable law on child labor existed (1907), and important reforms in the area of child incarceration had already been introduced, reflecting among other things recent ideas on child psychology and pedagogy coming out of Italy itself.

Statistics seemed to support the observations of Beltrani-Scalia, Orlando, and a host of others, though measures of juvenile delinquency come in several forms and require some sorting out. They include, for example, the annual number of convictions of minors (under age 21) for various crimes (gathered by the Justice Ministry); the number of minors for whom a judge has requested institutionalization (again Justice Ministry), a very different population from the previous one, as far from all convictions led to institutionalization, and the institutionalized included vagabonds and unruly children as well as criminals. An alternative pair of figures was the actual number of admissions of minors to penal establishments/reformatories and the population (by age) of those establishments (both kept by the Interior Ministry; some of these last statistics

have been reviewed above). In order to trace the growth of juvenile delinquency over the period in question, we have to use several of them.

Looking at some of the earliest (and probably least reliable) post-unification figures, for example, we find that the total number of convicted minors for 1863 was 10,511.²⁶ This figure would increase sevenfold by 1908, though given the problematic nature of that comparison—which should include consideration of population growth, more thorough policing, possibly sterner judges, and better statistics gathering—more significant may be the fact that only about 30 percent of the 1863 convictions were of children under the age of 18. In the 1870s, following the completion of unification, minor-age convictions had grown to over 12,000 (1876), though it is difficult to know how many of these were institutionalized and where they went (prisons, judicial jails, reformatories) (Ministero di Grazia e Giustizia 1876, 133). In that same period (1875), judges ordered the institutionalization of about 1,500 boys and 250 girls a year for reasons other than convictions with discernment (by definition convictions of 15 year-olds and up were considered with discernment). Almost all of these were under 18; about half were paternal correction cases, about 40 percent vagabonds and another 10 percent petty criminals (so presumably under 15 and without discernment). Observations from later decades, however, suggest that because of limited space in the reformatories not all of these orders may have been carried out.²⁷

By around 1890 minor-age convictions had increased to about 30,000. The biggest growth seems to have been among the under-18 year-olds who by this time accounted for about 50 percent of the total (as compared to 30 percent in 1863) (Beltrani-Scalia 1897b, 353). By 1900 minor-age convictions had grown to over 43,000 (Quarta 1908), and their continued growth would drive the crescendo of concern over juvenile delinquency in the first decade of the twentieth century.

As to the crimes minors committed, about half were minor offenses (*contravvenzioni*) punished at most by brief periods of arrest or fines, and half were more serious ones (*delitti*) that might result in reformatory, jail, or prison sentences. As described below, though, only a minority of minors convicted for *delitti* did in fact serve a sentence of any kind. Theft was easily the most frequent offense among both boys and girls, accounting for over 50 percent of minor-age convictions, a figure that rose to nearly 70 percent for under 14 year-olds.²⁸ So-called “blood crimes” (murder, assault) were less frequent accounting for 17 percent of 14–18 year old crime and 28 percent of 18–21 year old; these figures were of course considerably higher for boys than for girls. Crimes against public morality (*buon costume*), including rape and corruption of minors (*violenze carnali, atti di libidine violenti, corruzione dei minorenni, oltraggio al pudore*) were

rarely committed by girls whereas they took on increasing importance for boys as they grew older; not surprisingly the usually female victims of these crimes were themselves most often minors (Aschieri 1910; Benelli 1902, 344; DIRSTAT 1890–1895; Sermonti 1914, 218).

Though not the sort of offence that easily figured in annual statistics, there was also concern about children taking part in worker and socialist protests. And the specter of child involvement heightened the danger those protests presented to bourgeois society. For not only did the strike threaten capital, it served also—along with the party, the union, and the chambers of labor—as a training ground for young revolutionaries. So, for example, to cite two of the most important protests of the period, Beltrani-Scalia reported that 12 percent of those arrested for participation in the 1898 riots were minors. And Giulio Benelli, director of the Turin reformatory and active publicist, found in his canvassing of local magistrates that both adolescent girls and boys had taken part in the violence and vandalism of “Red Week” in 1914 (Beltrani-Scalia 1898, 423; Benelli 1915, 51; Canobbio 1902, 138).

It is interesting to compare the conviction figures with those for incarceration. In 1897, for example, the total number of convicted minors (with discernment) sentenced to incarceration was 2,259 (of which 56 were girls). According to the 1891 norms this group was specifically not to be sent to reformatories, but ideally to the Urbino Casa di correzione. Urbino, however, housed only about 200 inmates so most of this group ended up in adult jails or prisons (hopefully in separate quarters for minors). Another 30,000 plus *condannati* then were either fined or else simply sent home to their parents and told to behave. Of an indeterminate number of under 15 year-olds acquitted for lack of discernment only 36 were given reformatory sentences in that year, apparently a smaller number than even in the 1870s. One reason not to send this group to reformatory was the growth of paternal correction cases (*discoli*) and crowding in the reformatories; in 1897 about 1500 *discoli* (80 percent boys) constituted easily the largest group of children sent to the reformatories. Vagabond cases in 1897 (now regulated by the 1889 Public Security Law) numbered a bit below 700, little changed from 20 years before (Beltrani-Scalia 1898, 414). In the next decade, the conviction figures for minors skyrocketed. From 43,000 in 1900 to almost 70,000 by 1906 and by another 10 percent to 77,000 in 1908, the most recent figure available when the Committee on Juvenile Delinquency was created (Quarta 1908). As we explore below, little had been done by that date to accommodate larger numbers of child criminals.

How to explain this dramatic increase? Population growth, though rapid at about about 1 percent per annum, offers only a partial explanation. Other factors, of course, might have included more vigorous policing, sterner

judges, and improved statistics gathering. Be that as it may, the general perception at the time was of a nearly uncontrollable increase in criminal activity among the young. How, then, to explain the changing behavior of Italian youth? One might, first of all, have expected answers from the Italian positivist school of criminal anthropology which probably reached the peak of its influence in the 1900 decade (Villa 1985). Yet the positivists had little to offer. Even allowing for a rapid rate of eugenic degeneration (and so conceivably an increase in the percentage of “born criminals”), it would be difficult to explain a doubling of child crime in 10 years.²⁹ Common to most explanations instead were the forces of “modernization,” tangible or measurable ones like urbanization, industrialization, and emigration as well as their more ephemeral corollaries: a decline in religiosity, indifference to children on the part of the ever larger group of working-class parents (encouraged in their indifference by the demands of industrial labor), consumerism, materialism, the yellow press (*cronaca nera* in Italy), the loose morality espoused in books and plays.³⁰ One commentator, who specifically rejected positivist ideas about innate criminality, regretted that Italy led all her sister nations in the growth of juvenile delinquency and identified poverty and the failure to care for Italy’s children as the cause:

We see hordes of these children wandering aimlessly through the streets, alone, idle, abandoned by their families or lacking the comfort of a surname [a reference to illegitimacy]. They roam about, steal, beg, engage in pranks and . . . striking out ever further on the stormy sea of life, unconsciously prepare to take their places among the army of criminals.³¹

Few statements better capture the mood of concern that surrounded the phenomenon of Italian street children at the time.

Subsequent Reforms

The issue of child delinquency then contributed to more general concerns about the direction being taken by modern society. Italy enjoyed its “industrial revolution” at just this moment and while industrialization brought increased wealth, it also created new expectations, challenged values, and uprooted masses of people from a traditional way of life. The flip side of economic development might indeed be social (and even racial) degeneration.³²

Juvenile delinquency had been increasing in other Western contexts as well where it had also climbed upward on the political/public agenda. In the United States, for example, where by the turn of the century developments were closely watched by Europeans, the perceived failure of the reformatory movement led to new innovations in the areas of juvenile justice and

sentencing. In particular, the state of Illinois created a new juvenile court in Chicago in 1899 and instituted probationary sentencing; that example soon spread to other states as well (Mennel 1973, 124–57). Across the Atlantic, the United Kingdom introduced a juvenile court in 1905 (formalized by the Children Act of 1908), while France adopted probationary sentencing in 1906 and a juvenile court in 1912. Needless to say, the possibility of doing something similar in Italy received considerable discussion, and in 1907, for example, Alessandro Stoppato called in parliament for creation of a juvenile court (Bianchi 1901; Stoppato 1907).

A string of acts in the 1890s further elaborated the British system of reformatories and industrial schools, and according to the Children Act of 1908 only in exceptional cases were young persons under 16 to be sent to prison. For those aged 16 to 21 instead—identified as the formative years for criminal behavior—1902 saw introduction of the “Borstal system” according to which convicts in this age group at Borstal Prison were kept together for special trade, scholastic, and moral instruction as well as physical drill. In 1907–1908 it was determined that a regimen of this sort should be applied to all 16–21 year-old offenders (Harding et al. 1985, 246–8; Hinde 1951, 164–73).

France in the last decades of the nineteenth century saw instead the Mettray system come increasingly under attack, because of the failure to reform, because of unsanitary conditions, and because of the apparent spread of homosexuality encouraged by communal sleeping arrangements. There had, moreover, from about 1870 been a general transition underway from agricultural to more useful industrial training. The new century saw other important reforms including abolition of corporal punishment, reorganization, and new criteria for reformatory personnel (parallel developments also took place in Italy) (Badinter 1992, 364–73). Generally speaking, then, in various national contexts the period 1880–1914 saw a process of innovation and reform in response to both a growing problem and the perceived inadequacy of traditional methods of dealing with young offenders and potential offenders.

In Italy, following the introduction of the 1891 prison norms referred to above, gradual progress was made both in the segregation of minor-age inmates in jails and prisons as well as in the distinction of reformatories according to whether they housed unruly youth, vagabonds, or youths convicted of crimes.³³ Indeed the overall tenor in this regard of the Beltrani-Scalia period, at least after 1891, was of a transition from penal punishment of minors to their rehabilitation.

Subsequent measures included the introduction of excursions for well-behaved reformatory inmates. Begun in 1897, these were summer-time walking tours during which groups often numbering over 100 boys might cover a couple of hundred kilometers over several weeks. Generally

declared a success by the reformatory directors, in spite of the occasional escape, these tours brought the boys into contact with local populations who seem to have been welcoming—the offer of a glass of wine from a local landowner was a frequent occurrence, though acceptance was later forbidden.³⁴ Not surprisingly these tours avoided the larger cities. The boys reportedly returned from them morally and physically invigorated, some claiming that the tour had been one of the best experiences of their lives.³⁵

Reformatories, however, remained very much a part of the carceral universe. For while Beltrani-Scalia did recruit some more enlightened reformatory directors and eliminated, for example, corporal punishment, reformatory personnel continued to be drawn from the same pool as prison guards and frequently took a similar approach to their professional activities.³⁶ In 1902 Beltrani-Scalia's disciple Alessandro Doria took over as director general of prisons and reformatories. Doria's first important reform was to draw up a new set of personnel norms. According to these, which became law in 1904 and were instituted beginning in 1905, reformatory personnel were to have qualifications more resembling school teachers than prison guards; indeed many of the new employees, introduced as part of a full-scale substitution (the former guards transferred to more appropriate posts), were former teachers.³⁷ Further emphasizing the different approaches, reformatory and prison administrations were formally separated in 1905.³⁸

It was also in 1904 that the Istituto San Michele in Rome (or more precisely a section of that vast structure) was reopened as a reformatory. San Michele, intended for paternal correction cases aged 9–14 who had never been in another reformatory, was meant to be a model of Doria's new pedagogic approach. There were no bars on the windows; the personnel were carefully chosen; and the great gates of the institution were thrown open daily so that the inmates, accompanied by their teachers, could enjoy a stroll through the streets of Rome. In place of the usual work regime, the teachers applied an "educational manual labor method," a product of contemporary pedagogic study. According to this method, each new arrival spent his first 8–10 days doing more or less what he wanted; in particular he was given the opportunity to work with modeling clay. His subsequent introduction to the standard reformatory regime was meant to maintain this creative and positive view of work.³⁹ Indeed, San Michele earned the admiration of Maria Montessori, then developing her childhood education techniques at the University of Rome. Following a visit to the institute she exclaimed:

In Italy we no longer have prisons for children; let our foreign friends know it. We can proudly vaunt the most sacred conquest of civilization. And we must announce it for all to hear so that other countries can follow and imitate us. Let it be so in all the world: no more prisons for children.⁴⁰

For all the undoubted progress made at San Michele (holding about 200 inmates), Montessori in her enthusiasm overlooked the fact that several thousand children (under 18) still inhabited Italian jails and prisons (as opposed to reformatories and the Urbino or Forlì Casa di correzione).

Doria and the reformatory administration were of course aware of developments outside Italy and experimented with solutions tried elsewhere. For example, in addition to the industrial reformatory school model used in San Michele, agricultural work was introduced at La Generala in Turin and at San Lazzaro Parmense (Parma). As it turned out, however, over 90 percent of reformatory boys came from urban working-class backgrounds and wanted nothing to do with farm work, and so those experiments were abandoned (there were on the other hand a number of agricultural colonies among the private reformatories). Similarly unsuccessful were attempts to place paternal correction cases with foster families.⁴¹ As compared to the United States with its developing West or industrialized Britain, where such schemes were used, Italy had no geographic or institutional open spaces where adolescent labor might be welcome or in short supply; and the general Italian demographic situation, in this period of mass emigration, was of course one of exuberance or surplus. Such an environment was unlikely to encourage fosterage.

Doria's various reforms, building on those of Beltrani-Scalia, were formalized in a new set of norms for reformatories introduced in 1907. These included guidelines on personnel, educational regimes, punishment (including segregation, a diet of broth and bread, and transfer to the stricter *risformatori di rigore*, but not of course corporal punishment), excursions, prizes for good behavior, and so on.⁴² Problems nonetheless remained. Primary among these were a lack of space and the continued presence in the reformatories of 18–20 year olds who exerted a corrupting influence on younger inmates. On the issue of space, by 1907, two new reformatories were under construction and two more in the planning stage. Progress was slow, though, and all four were still unopened in 1914. Elimination of the older inmates would instead have required legislative changes, for example redefining minor-age as under 18 (rather than 21), but these changes were not forthcoming.⁴³

The issues of reformatories and juvenile delinquency also began to find their way into parliamentary debate in the first decade of the 1900s when, among other things, proposals for a juvenile court like those created in the United States were heard and also for a system of probation and inspectors. Influential parliamentarians, however, including Oronzo Quarta who would head the Committee on Juvenile Delinquency, thought these approaches inappropriate for Italy. According to Quarta, the considerable discretion left to the American juvenile judges was incompatible with the

Italian legal system and Italian judicial traditions. Moreover, he feared that creating an army of probation officers would lead to unacceptable violations of the domestic hearth, held to be a sacred place by Italians.⁴⁴

Although juvenile courts would be a long time coming in Italy, several important reforms regarding the administration of juvenile justice were introduced in the 1900 decade. In 1904, for example, the same year as the Doria reform described earlier, Italian legislators introduced suspended sentences (*condanna condizionale*) targeted in particular at boys under 18, men over 60, and girls and women of all ages.⁴⁵ This law has a curious and “global” history. Several years earlier, the English feminist and philanthropist Lucy Bartlett (later Re Bartlett) had moved to Italy and undertaken a study first of women’s prisons and then reformatories. She next became interested in the American probation system and traveled to the United States to see it functioning firsthand. There she was especially impressed by the system of probation and volunteer assistance she encountered in, of all places, Indianapolis. Returning to Italy, Bartlett’s advocacy played an important role in the legislation’s success (Bartlett 1908).

Another fundamental procedural change came in 1908 at the peak of concern about juvenile crime. Justice Minister Orlando, not long before appointing the Juvenile Delinquency Committee, issued a circular calling for a new approach to the legal treatment of accused minors. Though not creating a juvenile magistrate per se, he did call for specialization where possible. In each tribunal one magistrate ideally was to take responsibility for juvenile cases and thus gain special sensitivity and competence. Moreover, in issuing his judgements he was to take into account the family situations of the accused minors and the social milieux in which they lived. Trials of minors were also to be conducted during relatively quiet periods so as to avoid large numbers of onlookers. In the following years judges in several cities did come to specialize in juvenile cases. One example of these, perhaps the first, was Raffaele Majetti in Rome. We encountered Majetti in chapter 2 combating the trade in *petits italiens* and do again in chapter 5 as he also founded an important refuge for street children in the capital. Subsequently, and following up on the 1908 Orlando circular, the penal procedure code of 1913 forbade admittance to court rooms of spectators under 18 and required that trials involving defendants of that same age group be held behind closed doors (M. Majetti 1932, 45; Orlando 1908; Pisani 1972).

Already in the 1891 prison norms, provisions had been made for *società di patronati* to assist poor individuals (especially minors) accused of crimes, on trial, and released after incarceration. Some *patronati* already existed at the time, though Beltrani-Scalia noted that they were less than thriving. The intent of the new norms in this regard was to formalize the

status of the *patronati* (including submission of regulatory norms to the Interior Ministry for approval) and reinvigorate them. They were, however, private initiatives privately financed, and little was accomplished prior to 1900 after which the general level of child anxiety rose so rapidly.

What references one can find to the *patronati* at the beginning of the decade, most often—like discussion around the prison norms a decade before—lament their limited development (Benelli 1902, 385; Bianchi 1901; Cannobio 1900). A few years later that situation had changed significantly, and not surprisingly the important initiatives came in the major urban areas. A brief look at three of these should suffice to establish the new mood of the 1900 decade. Already in 1899, a group of Milanese lawyers led by Camillo Cavagnari had organized a Legal Defense Committee for Minors (Comitato per la difesa giuridica e per il patronato dei minorenni traviati, pregiudicati e delinquenti). Described at the time as a new form of assistance for Italy, the committee sought not only to offer legal assistance but also professional training and employment services for minors after their release from reformatory or jail. Cavagnari's initiative combined with that of the physician-psychologist Antonio Martinazzoli, and the resulting institute focused on both the legal and mental health aspects of the problem of errant youth.⁴⁶

After 1904 the *patronati* found a new function in the monitoring of minors on suspended sentences (the new law on suspended sentences had not provided for the creation of probation officers). Not surprisingly, Lucy Bartlett was a pioneer in this regard. In 1906 she founded a *patronato* specifically for minors on suspended sentences. The Rome *patronato*, following the Indianapolis example, enlisted student volunteers and assigned them individual cases/children to monitor and assist; reportedly a successful approach as the young volunteers notably seem to have overcome the suspicions of working-class families regarding bourgeois intervention/intrusion in their homes. Summer vacations, however, and a decline in the initial enthusiasm inspired by the program meant that within a year or so of founding the *patronato* complained of difficulty in recruiting/retaining sufficient volunteers (Bartlett 1908; 1909; Calabrese and Greco 1909; Trompeo 1909). Bartlett's model was much imitated though with varying degrees of success.

Another oft-cited model *patronato* was founded in Turin in 1908 by Giuseppe Cesare Pola, a prosecuting magistrate there. Similar in scope to Cavagnari's initiative, Pola's Turin Minors Legal Assistance Committee (Comitato di difesa dei minorenni tradotti in giustizia) combined both assistance and police functions. The latter included various battles including one against abuses of the Paternal Correction Law and another against the serving of alcoholic drinks to adolescents. At the same time the

ambitious committee sought to monitor children passing through the courts and penal system and again after their release from reformatory or jail, especially should their parents prove unable or unwilling to watch after their interests; they also sought like Bartlett to enlist volunteers to assign to minors serving suspended sentences.⁴⁷

Both Bartlett's and Pola's examples were imitated, and by 1910 Doria reported that there were 33 *società di patronato* in 29 cities (and more would follow). The *patronati* remained private initiatives though the state (via the Interior Ministry) did regulate them and budgeted a small subsidy. As such they constitute something of a bridge between the official world of child incarceration and the nonofficial one of child-saving (see chapter 5). Predictably the period heard calls for increased state funding and the creation of a National Federation (Andreotti 1910; Cherici 1910; Doria 1910d; Giannini 1923).

Delinquenti, Vagabondi, Discoli

Alongside the child criminal (*delinquente, condannato*), the figures of the unruly child or paternal correction case (*discolo*) and of the child vagabond (*vagabondo, ozioso*) loomed large, both in the public/private imagination and in the institutions created by the state to house these three categories of errant youth. Paternal correction cases numbered far fewer than criminal convictions of minors, though the institutional space they occupied was similar and their growth also considerable. In 1865, shortly after unification, few parents resorted to (and perhaps knew about) paternal correction, and the total number of cases that year was a mere 90. By the turn of the century paternal correction requests had grown to between 2000–3000, of which 20–30 percent were girls (as compared to the 2–3 percent of girls among minors convicted of crimes). Almost by definition the motivation for paternal correction was resistance to parental authority, but other reasons often cited by parent-applicants included theft, especially for boys, and immorality, a charge leveled at a majority of institutionalized girls. How, though, to account for the dramatic increase? For one, awareness must have increased. Surely some parents always find it impossible to discipline their children and so welcome the possibility of sending them to a correctional institution. But this awareness seems to have gone further still as reformatory officials repeatedly complained that poor parents were resorting to the Paternal Correction Law in order to unburden themselves of yet another mouth to feed. Some parents reportedly exaggerated or invented their children's bad behavior or else encouraged their children in behavior that could then be classified as unruly (or vagabond for that matter). Poor parents

then were using the reformatories as state-subsidized boarding schools. Masters of this ruse seem to have been the Neapolitans, and in the period 1906–1909 Naples accounted for fully 30 percent of paternal correction requests. Administrators and judges viewed this fact as yet another example of Neapolitan chicanery and half of these requests were in fact refused. The strategy comes as little surprise. Clearly poverty drove parents to act in ways we might view today as insensitive. We have already reviewed instances of married parents consigning infants to foundling homes and others of parents contracting out very young children for wandering trades and dangerous occupations. Exploitation of the Paternal Correction Law indeed represents a reasonably successful way to take advantage of public assistance. Conditions and diet were not ideal in the reformatories, but neither were they in the homes of Italy's wretched poor. Moreover, when the child became old enough to work and contribute to the family economy, he or she could be reclaimed by the parents. Reformatory administrators complained about this latter practice as well, arguing that parents were pulling their children out before the process of education/reform was complete and for purely economic reasons (Beltrani-Scalia 1897b; Canevelli 1899, 344; G. De Sanctis 1902; Doria 1910b; Doria 1910c; Doria 1912; Sganga 1910).

In any case, authorities could hardly cope with the volume of requests they received. In 1895, for example, judges ordered institutionalization for about 2000 paternal correction cases (close to the total number of convicted minor-age criminals sentenced to incarceration). Already that number represented an initial winnowing as, contrary to the civil code that instructed magistrates to accept all paternal correction requests without question, something like a third were rejected. Given, however, that the total number of places in reformatories for paternal correction cases at the time was about 2200 and periods of correction ideally lasted from 2 to 5 years, those 2000 cases severely strained the system and only about half of them were in fact admitted to the reformatories (with a better rate for girls than boys). In response to this critical situation, the minister of justice issued a circular in mid-1897 ordering judicial authorities to combat abuses of paternal correction and reduce the numbers of cases approved. As a result, those numbers did drop by about 25 percent, bringing the system more or less under control. Another measure taken in hopes of reducing potential correction requests was to begin transferring the children to reformatories far from their homes, thereby depriving parents of the comfort of keeping an eye on their children. Nonetheless, the number of *discoli* present in the reformatories had grown to 3,873 by the end of 1901.⁴⁸

Child vagabonds were also of special concern. The presence of dirty, shoeless street urchins distressed both the Italian middle class and well-heeled foreign visitors; and it inspired the Italian child-saving movement.

It is a presence which undoubtedly could be traced back through centuries but urban growth combined with the aspirations of the unified state increased both the scale of the problem and the anxiety it inspired. In 1876, for example, the physician Serafino Biffi could refer to the "large number of [corrupted youths], especially in the city, who lead a vagabond life, wallowing in vice and misery," and subsequently concern would only increase.⁴⁹ Nor did application of Public Security Law articles 113 and 114 by local public administrations provide a solution. As already noted, the annual number of children institutionalized for vagabondage remained small and basically unchanged in spite of the undoubted increase in the number of street children. As a snapshot of this group we might consider the figures for 1901. Of the just under 500 children in this category sent to reformatories (85 percent boys), 356 were classified as simply vagabonds, 77 as reputed criminals, 16 as beggars, and 37 as prostitutes. Nonetheless, the total number of child vagabonds in reformatories (on December 31 1901) was 2,451, not so much smaller than the paternal correction cases (suggesting that the *discoli* served shorter sentences than the vagabonds).⁵⁰ Apparently the courts and reformatories, already overwhelmed by the volume of criminal and paternal correction cases with which they had to deal, sought to de-emphasize the vagabond law. In response, as we explore in chapter 5, a host of private initiatives sprung up to cope with this problem, perceived as a multiple threat: to public order, to the future health of the Italian polity (or race), and to Italy's reputation abroad.

What did the world of children institutionalized in correctional facilities look like in the first decade of the twentieth century? The number of minors annually convicted of crimes grew, as we have seen, to nearly 80,000 by 1908. But only a small fraction of these were institutionalized, around 2000. Of the latter figure, only a few dozen were 9–14 year olds acquitted for lack of discernment and sent to reformatories for correction just the same: ideally the *Case di correzione* in Urbino and Forlì would have housed the rest (9–14 with discernment plus 15–21), but they could accommodate a population of only a few hundred. The majority then, certainly including many children under the age of 18, ended up in the judicial jails and prisons. As seen, paternal correction requests ranged around 2500 per year of which perhaps 1700 were ordered sent to reformatories and about 1000 actually entered the institutions; annual vagabondage cases resulting in institutionalization numbered another 500 or so.

We can also look at the total minor-age population in reformatories, jails, and prisons at a given moment in time, a population including both short-term detainees and multiyear convicts. We find, for example, according to Interior Ministry statistics for 1901, nearly 3000 minors in true prisons, though only about 400 of these convicts were under 18 and about

40 under 16. The vast majority were 18–21-year-old males, and out of the 3000 only 40 were 18–21-year-old females and one 16–18-year-old girl. The same source reveals that judicial jails at the time housed nearly 7000 minors including almost 2000 16–18 year olds and 1000 under 16 year olds, some reportedly as young as 12.⁵¹ Subsequently, and thanks largely it would seem to the introduction of suspended sentences in 1904, that number dropped dramatically. In 1907, for example, nearly 15,000 suspended sentences were issued to under 18 year olds while the minor-age population of judicial jails reportedly declined (from 7000 in 1901) to a mere 1500.⁵²

Looking instead at a special investigation of juvenile delinquency carried out by a sub-commission of the Commission for Judicial Statistics (including Beltrani-Scalia) at about this same time, we find 1459 convicted boys under 16 held in judicial jails in 1899 (to which we should probably add another 5 percent of girls). The total number of under 16 year olds held in the jails that year (and so including those awaiting trial or transfer to a reformatory) was almost 3000 (4 percent girls). That study further revealed, as did judicial statistics for all age groups, higher rates of conviction in the South. Average annual numbers of minor-age convictions per 100,000 minor-age population ranged from over 1000 in Calabria, Basilicata, and Abruzzo-Molise down to between 270 and 320 in Emilia, Lombardy, Piedmont and Tuscany.⁵³

State-run reformatories instead housed about 2000 boys and 150 girls (the latter in the single state-run facility for girls in Perugia), while private reformatories housed another 2000 boys and over 3000 girls (4000 by 1907).⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that by the latter date there were about equal numbers of boys and girls in reformatories, in spite of the fact that girls accounted for only about 30 percent of paternal correction cases and perhaps 25 percent of vagabondage ones. Girls in fact on average served longer sentences than boys, likely in part because there was greater incentive for parents to pull out older boys than older girls and put them to work.

In spite, then, of nearly twenty years of progressive reform and revision of the regulatory norms, *most* minors incarcerated for correctional purposes were still ending up in jails and prisons, “necessarily subject to the same fate as adult criminals” in the words of Orlando (Orlando 1909, 392). For the under 18 year olds the situation was a bit better and probably about 60 percent ended up in reformatories as opposed to jails and prisons. To ameliorate the situation, Doria and his supporters proposed creation of a series of reformatory-like institutions—one in each of Italy’s 16 regions—to house under 18 year olds whether accused, on trial, or convicted and serving sentences (all these categories at the time most often ended up in the judicial jails) (Doria 1910a; Borsi 1910). Nothing, however, came of the proposal.

The Committee on Juvenile Delinquency

Creation of the Committee on Juvenile Delinquency in 1909 signaled the peak of interest in the problem so that in 1910 Giulio Benelli, director of the Turin reformatory, could write: "Never before has there been such a fervor of activity on the part of scholars and philanthropists for this sacred cause" (Benelli 1910, 393). And parallel with the work of that committee there emerged a new consensus regarding the increased role that the state should play in the protection and regulation of youth.

For decades observers had debated the merits of private (usually Catholic) versus public administration of reformatories, *patronato* societies, and other aspects of juvenile correction.⁵⁵ By about 1902, however, the ever-more dramatic scale of the problem predictably swayed opinion in favor of state action. Already in that year Giovanni Giolitti, recently become prime minister, issued a circular in which he stated that "assistance for children, their redemption, their defense, and education, are all tasks that go beyond the sphere of public charity and enter instead into that of the obligations of a society to its members and to itself." And in the words of an *asilo* director from Alessandria: "Now in Italy too the conviction is spreading that the protection of infancy should not be left to private philanthropy but instead is the responsibility of the collectivity and the state. And so we need new social legislation to that end" (Canobbio 1903, 285–6).

Statements like these of course went beyond the specific concern of juvenile delinquency and linked it up with the general issue of children, especially poor children, and marginalization. They testify to the belief which emerged in the 1900 decade that Italy, as a modern state, should both protect children from danger and protect society from dangerous children. Neither concern would of course subsequently disappear. They would, however, come up against hard fiscal realities, like the impossibility of the state being able to pay the costs associated with the Morally and Materially Abandoned Infants Bill. As a result, those concerns faded into an environment of rising social tension and then were overshadowed by the social and political trauma of war. They would re-emerge of course in the postwar period, though in a dramatically changed political context.

As the decade progressed, a general conviction held that sad experience had exposed the inadequacy of private initiatives. Proposals were made for the creation of state-run institutions to monitor, assist, and correct working-class children from birth to maturity, or at least from birth to working age. The inadequacy of Italian schools, designed to cater to the bourgeoisie, necessitated a different approach for the children of the lower orders, an approach that in certain proposals clearly sought to "manage" working-class population, diverting especially boys from asocial non-productive

behavior and turning them into productive and obedient laborers. Applying the innovations of Montessori and others, the process would begin with a thorough network of infant crèches and continue on through industrial schools and, where necessary, reformatories (though it was hoped that a reform of this sort would divert most potential correction cases to day schools). Indeed, presaging developments abroad and later on in Italy, the general concept of child care/formation extended to birth and prenatal preparation and so encompassed maternal training insofar as “care for early infancy must be raised up to the rank of a state function.” Indeed, the inadequacy of working-class parenting in general was frequently cited as the root cause of juvenile delinquency.⁵⁶

A Giolittian consensus then emerged endorsing an expanded role for the state in the social sphere. That consensus, combined with international developments (like juvenile courts and the UK Children Act of 1908) and alarm over the rising child conviction statistics, led to the creation in November 1909 of the Committee on Juvenile Delinquency. Chaired by Quarta, the committee included a number of notable names including several already encountered in these pages: Director General of Prisons Alessandro Doria; the philanthropist Lucy Bartlett; the anthropologist Scipio Sighele; the criminal anthropologist and parliamentarian Enrico Ferri; Ersilia Majno, founder of the Asilo Mariuccia in Milan; Giuseppe Cesare Pola, founder of child-saving institutions in Turin; as well as several other contributors to Doria’s *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* who wrote regularly on juvenile issues: Alessandro Stoppato; Raffaele Calabrese, and Antonio Martinazzoli.

Divided into three sub-committees that met throughout 1910 and 1911, the committee published its proposed Minors Code in 1912. Consisting of no less than 205 articles, the Minors Code went beyond the issue of juvenile delinquency (its initial mandate) and sought to bring together many of the issues explored in the present study. It testifies to the conception at the time of the various problems of marginalized children as pieces of a larger whole.

Created just months after enactment of the UK Children Act, the Italian Committee on Juvenile Delinquency could not help but be influenced by the British model. What emerged, however, was by no means a Latin copy of the Anglo-Saxon original. For while the British Children Act and Italian Minors Code share several fundamental characteristics—creation of a juvenile court, a section on the prevention of cruelty to children—they also differ in important ways. The Children Act, for example, eliminated prison sentences and penal servitude for all young persons under the age of 16—which the Minors Code failed to do—and devoted a section each to reformatories/industrial schools and to juvenile smoking. Unlike its Italian

counterpart, instead, it omitted consideration of child labor or emigration; nor did it create a national network of delegates and inspectors (Inglis 1909). Not surprisingly, the Minors Code owed more to the previous 40 years of Italy's experience with its own problems of childhood than to the British model.

The Minors Code was divided into three sections (or *libri*). The first created a juvenile justice system; the second covered issues of social protection and control; and the third criminal offences and procedure. In a revision of usual practice, minor age was to be redefined as ending at age 18 (rather than 21), a change in keeping with decades of reformatory experience that had shown 18–20 year olds to be an unmanageable and corrupting element better classified as adult. The centerpiece of the juvenile justice system would be a corps of specially trained juvenile magistrates, one in each judicial district (there were 20 of these in 1913). Presiding over these magistrates and generally responsible for ensuring the observation of laws and regulations related to the care and protection of minors was a special tribunal of 6 members in Rome, a sort of juvenile supreme court. At the local level instead several new figures would be created to both monitor the behavior of and protect Italian youth. For each *mandamento* (a judicial subdivision no longer in use; at the time they numbered about 1800) the relevant juvenile magistrate would appoint a “delegate” responsible for general issues of child protection and discipline. There were also to be an indeterminate number of “inspectors”; these were essentially probation officers responsible for enforcing “*libertà sorvegliata*” or oversight of the suspended sentences introduced in 1904. Larger cities (population over 50,000) would also have “vigilance agents” (including women) who were to concern themselves with the urban problem of street children (vagabonds, etc.). All of these policing elements answered to the juvenile magistrate who might also enlist volunteers and the *patronati scolastici*, privately funded groups intended to encourage working-class school attendance. Moreover, all existing societies and institutes for the protection and assistance of minors, while maintaining their status as privately funded charities, were to come under the authority of the juvenile magistrates and join together in a national federation. Quarta had apparently overcome his earlier reluctance and all in all the envisioned system represented a remarkable, centralized network of surveillance, protection, and control under the juvenile magistrates and special tribunal.⁵⁷

The issues addressed in the Minors Code's section on protection and control included paternal authority (*patria potestà*) and guardianship (or fosterage); foundlings and abandonment; mandatory schooling; child labor; emigration; and surveillance and discipline. It brought together then several of the strands of child legislation we have been following.

On the issue of *patria potestà* legislators had traditionally been hesitant to invade the domestic sphere and challenge parental authority. The crisis of juvenile delinquency and of the working-class family had instead changed all that, and the Minors Code spelt out in newly explicit terms the conditions under which that authority might be lost, including conviction for serious crimes, habitual drunkenness, begging, and failure to care for and properly bring up one's children.⁵⁸ These determinations would of course have been made by the juvenile magistrate.

This challenge to parental authority echoed that of a couple of years before in the failed legislation on materially and morally abandoned children (see chapter 5). Furthermore the proposed code included articles on foundlings and "abandoned minors," including orphans and materially and morally abandoned children. The turning cradles were of course to be eliminated and direct consignment required for all foundling-home and receiving-hall admittances. Abandoned children eligible for assistance were to include all boys under 12 and girls under 16 who were orphaned or whose parents were either deprived of *patria potestà* or simply unable to care for them.

While the articles on mandatory schooling did not significantly alter existing legislation but simply added new controls on truancy (administered of course by the juvenile magistrate), those on working children amounted to a new child labor law, one that presumably covered all children, not just those working in industry and mines. As compared to the revised 1907 law (see chapter 3), restrictions were significantly tightened. So although the code actually lowered the minimum working age down to 10 (from 12), that limit applied to all work, including agricultural, vastly expanding the existing law's scope. The code also specified separate (and generally higher) ages for the categories covered in previous legislation. Notably, the code also specified a minimum age for itinerant vendors (*venditori ambulanti*) of 14; itinerant vendors had not been covered by the original Wandering Trades (*professioni girovaghe*) Law of 1873 (see chapter 2).⁵⁹ The Minors Code set a maximum workday for 10–16 year-olds of 8 hours, a considerable reduction from the then current 11 hours (for 12–15 year olds). Overall it was a stricter law than 1907 or even 1902 and again is especially notable for including (if only implicitly) agricultural work.

Child emigration came under both the social protection and criminal offences sections. In order to guard against material abandonment, the code required emigrating parents and guardians to demonstrate that provisions had been made for children left behind in order to get permission (from the juvenile magistrate) to emigrate. Given the levels of emigration at the time, this would likely have been a monumental task for the proposed 20 juvenile magistrates. Child emigration offences instead more

or less repeated those of the 1901 Emigration Law on labor migration, wandering trades, and prostitution (see chapter 2).⁶⁰

In keeping with the gradually growing invasiveness of the state, the juvenile magistrate was authorized to visit and investigate schools, factories, private reformatories, and any other place where children were to be found, including private homes. These powers allowed the magistrate to better pursue delinquent parents, employers, and other adult abusers of children.

The final section of the code dealt with procedure and the penalties to be imposed on those who neglected and abused children. With regard to procedure, the code instructed that minors when arrested were never to be held with adults, and trials would not be public, to protect the identity of the accused minors. On penalties, in addition to moral and material abandonment on the part of parents and guardians, child labor abuses, ambulant professions, and white slaving, the code specifically imposed fines and sentences for getting children (under 16) drunk and for employing girls (under 16) as bar maids (except in family businesses). Jail sentences were specified for the "abandonment" of children under 14 and for the mistreatment of those under 16 (an increase from 12 in the 1889 penal code [art. 391]). As to crimes committed by children, the code drafters chose not to reproduce the various penal code articles we have already reviewed. They did, however, intend that no under 18 year olds go to adult jails or prisons, a measure that would have required construction or conversion of new facilities.

The Minors Code combined a new level of support and organization for combating juvenile delinquency and the problem of street children with protections for children abused in a host of situations—in the workplace, emigrating, at home, as the product of "illicit" unions—that had grown more ominous in the public imagination over the previous couple of decades. It blended the alarm about dangerous children with the concern to protect children in perilous situations. As with foundling reform and the Law on Materially and Morally Abandoned Children, however, the years of study and effort that went into the Italian Minors Code came to naught. In the several years following its initial publication one encounters frequent reference to imminent passage. There is even a concern, expressed for example by Benelli, that the existing laws and regulations relative to children are not being enforced in anticipation of introduction of the code. Such was not to be the case, however. The Minors Code was never enacted, and an Italian juvenile court, for example, was only created in 1934.⁶¹

The Minors Code was indeed ambitious, and it raised a series of technical and theoretical issues. Was the mandate of the juvenile magistrate, at once judge, social worker, and police administrator, too broad and unwieldy? Did the code go too far in its invasion of the domestic sphere

and challenge to paternal authority? It also would have represented a huge expense: 20 new magistrates plus thousands of delegates, inspectors, and agents (though some committee members proposed that these latter positions be voluntary ones). Inevitably fulfillment of the code's provisions would also have required creation of new institutional space (and so the necessary personnel) as well.

In part, the code's failure must also owe something to an apparent decline in the level of anxiety over juvenile crime after 1910. At about that time the alarmed statements of Orlando and others in the past few years gave way to observations that minor-age crime appeared to be in decline and that the statistics on minor-age convictions which had caused so much concern were probably exaggerated. No less an authority than Alberto Aschieri, till that time Director General of Statistics, reported figures showing that minor-age convictions had been essentially stationary between 1887 and 1906, a very different picture from that painted by Quarta and others a year or two before (Aschieri 1910). Meanwhile Benelli and others downplayed the significance of those convictions. Many were for minor infractions, for example petty theft, an almost natural part of childhood. Once upon a time those sorts of infractions had been dealt with in the home, but the recent history of increased industrialism and the consequent disintegration of the family meant that more and more juvenile filching came in for official scrutiny and so statistics gathering (Benelli 1913; 1914a; 1914b; 1914c; Stoppato 1912a; Stoppato 1912b).

By the second decade of the twentieth century, Italy had indeed experienced a dramatic increase in industrialization and urban and economic growth. It is not surprising then that at this time something of a consensus also emerged regarding the link between industrialization and juvenile delinquency, a consensus revealed among other places in some of the Juvenile Delinquency Committee reports. According to this argument, industrialization, by forcing both mother and father to work in the factory, contributed fundamentally to the disintegration of the family. A similar threat was posed by massive temporary emigration which left so many homes fatherless. The result was a decline in affection for children and a failure to bring them up correctly. Left largely to their own devices ("abandoned" in the parlance of the day), these children took to the streets and so eventually to a life of crime. And while juvenile delinquency was of course primarily a working-class issue, nonetheless some saw a parallel between the modern forces of industrial life, which distanced lower-class women from their natural domestic and child-caring sphere, and that other modern movement of feminism which exercised a similar influence on middle-class women (Guarnieri-Ventimiglia 1912; Majno-Bronzini 1912, 226; Mazzarisi 1912; Melilli 1911; Sermonti 1915, 1-7; Tazzari 1914).

Reformatory Life

One of the most difficult things to get at in the study of children, especially marginalized children, is a sense of their everyday life.⁶² Poor children rarely leave any sort of testimony and even adult recollections of reformatory life are infrequent. Nonetheless, occasional snippets—like the story of Amilcare Mariani—do emerge, even from a study largely of official sources, and allow us some insight into the conditions and life inside the reformatory.

Following the reforms of 1891 (Beltrani-Scalia) and 1904–07 (Doria), most commentators agreed that prior to those developments both juvenile convicts and paternal correction cases had not been well handled and that reformatories had been prisons for children.⁶³ Child criminals might be chained and beaten, were held together with adults, and tried in public. Paternal correction cases too might be held with adults, for example in the judicial jails, while awaiting transfer to a reformatory, and in 1902 the mixing of children and adults in holding cells was still reported in at least 20 provinces.⁶⁴ Conveyance, especially to the small number of reformatories might require long trips. On one occasion, the director of the Perugia reformatory noted the inappropriateness of girls being brought to the reformatories, possibly on overnight trips, by young male police agents.⁶⁵

Both the *case di correzione* and the reformatories had been operated as workhouse/prisons with little thought given to reform, education, or instruction. The work regime must have been hard and an 1893 inspection at the Naples Reformatory revealed that, contrary to the 1886 Child Labor Law, inmates, many under 15, were washing lead type and engaging in other dangerous occupations; one child had lost a hand while operating a machine in the print shop. Punishments too were prison-like and might include the use of strait jackets and leg irons. Food was apparently poor and at times in short supply; and reduced rations or a diet of bread and water for up to thirty days (combined with cellular confinement but interrupted for normal rations on Thursdays and Sundays) might be a punishment for insubordination or other infractions.⁶⁶

Information on how long minors spent in the various carceral institutions varies. “Delinquents” were sentenced for specific periods of time. In 1897, for example, about 25 percent of minor-age incarcerated convicts received sentences of less than a year; another 45 percent spent 1 to 3 years in prison or jail and the remainder (30 percent) over 3 years (Beltrani-Scalia 1898, 417). Reformatory sentences (mostly paternal correction) instead were usually indeterminate and might be decided either by the director or by the child’s parents. Two to five years, again, was generally considered necessary for the proper correction of unruly youths. Taking one year’s figures

as an example, the 1912 statistics for those released from reformatories show 10 percent had been in for one year or less and another 11 percent for between one and two years. Half of those discharged had instead spent the ideal 2–5 years in the reformatory while another 28 percent had been in for longer still.⁶⁷

As we have seen, some inmates tried to escape (and some succeeded). There were classic attempts to scale the reformatory walls, like that of Mariani and accomplices, as well as holes broken through walls, sheets used as escape ropes, jumping out of train windows during conveyance, and so on. On several occasions groups carried out planned escapes during the summer-time walking excursions. In one case, at Bosco Marengo just ten months after the Mariani escape, 22 boys aged 12 to 20 (out of a group of 142 out for a Sunday walk!) attempted to escape. A few of the youngest were immediately recaptured or heeded the exhortation to stop. The majority, however, got away, some by force and one guard/instructor was left with a bloodied head. Doria's investigation of the Bosco Marengo incident revealed a negligent director, presumably the same enlightened one who had arrived about a year before, who had allowed even the most insubordinate inmates to take part in the excursion; at the time of the escape he himself had left the group to accept a lunch invitation. The director was subsequently dismissed and by the following February all but three of the fugitives seem to have been recaptured.⁶⁸

The primary activity of minors in reformatories, *case di correzione*, and jails was work. In response to the sort of abuses already noted, reformers sought to lighten that work load, eliminate dangerous activities, and include a pedagogical element. Ideally, the 1904 Doria reform was to transform the reformatories from workhouses into technical schools from which inmates would emerge with useful industrial skills, and this intent was reinforced by the new reformatory norms of 1907.

According to those norms, the reformatory inmate's day began no earlier than 5 a.m. (about the time many children working in textile factories started in the summer months). His first activity was to clean himself and his cell (for one hour). His three meals were taken rapidly (one hour in all) and his movements regulated by a series of trumpet calls. One-and-one-half hours per day were devoted to school; the primary goal was an elementary school certificate but the reformatory was also to offer instruction in industrial drawing and music. Instruction was complemented by another one-and-one-half hours of supervised study hall. The inmates workday was not to exceed 6 hours, considerably fewer than encountered by many child workers outside the reformatory. Work of course remained central to the program, though the principal aim of that work was not any particular production but the acquisition of useful skills. Nonetheless, the

reformatories were permitted to take in contracted work and the children, once they had achieved a certain level of expertise, were to receive wages (possibly saved up till their discharge). Discipline was strict, of course; inmates were to maintain silence during work and school, rise when adults entered, and salute the director. They were also, however, allowed a couple of hours a day of recreation during which they could talk and play; and they spent a couple of hours doing gymnastic exercises and drills. Each reformatory had a chaplain who imparted religious instruction and conducted services (though allowances were to be made for non-Catholics). Punishments for insubordination and rule-breaking ranged from simple scolding and denial of privileges up to isolation in a *cella di rigore* for as long as ten days with a diet of bread and broth. The *cella di rigore* was only for 14 year olds and above. Continued offences might also lead to transfer to a *risformatorio di rigore* (like the one at Tivoli). It is difficult to know how rigorously the new norms were applied, but indications suggest that state reformatories were fairly well run by this time. Doria even worried that improvements might have encouraged still more parents to treat paternal correction as a form of state-sponsored boarding school. The 1907 norms required that parents pay one lira per day for their children, a figure about equal to a good child labor wage. It is likely, as in the past, that these charges were generally waived on the grounds of poverty.⁶⁹

Similar efforts were apparently also being made, if in a less systematic way, for children in jails and prisons. In one specific example from the first decade of the 1900s, the Rome jurist Raffaele Majetti introduced a toy making workshop for the boys kept at Regina Coeli, Rome's main prison, a sign among other things of the continued presence of minors in Italy's highest security institutions.

One of the major underlying concerns relative to both street youth and incarcerated youth was sexuality. Lower-class girls were of course frequently the target of sexual predators; and that danger garnered special attention when those girls occupied public space (spaces outside of the home, school, or factory). To protect girls from sexual abuse and the presumed attractions of a life of prostitution, conservatories for girls both in danger (*pericolanti*) and already fallen (*pericolati*) had been in existence for centuries.⁷⁰ These same concerns lay behind many, perhaps most, of the paternal correction cases for girls, as well as cases of girl convicts.

Girls then were in danger because of their sexuality while that same sexuality posed a corrupting threat to society in general. The situation for boys was different. Little was said about boy prostitution though of course it existed.⁷¹ Homosexuality, instead, and also the sexual abuse of boys was an important concern. Traditionally reformatories (and also prisons) had

used communal dormitories. The need to separate minor-age from adult convicts stemmed in large part from concern about the sodomizing of young boys in those dormitories when poorly supervised; one finds no end of references to "corruption" and "depravity," and the implication certainly goes beyond the invitation to a life of crime.

Age separation of course could not prevent homosexual relations between the boys themselves. An important measure in this regard was the introduction of cellular sleeping arrangements. By 1912 all the state reformatories save Naples had been converted from dormitories to cells.⁷² Still, reformatory directors had to be vigilant. Perhaps in part to deflect criticism in this regard, frequent reference was made to the corrupt (working-class) environments from which reformatory inmates came. In the first year of the century, for example, and probably before, it seems to have been fairly standard practice to include as part of each admittance's medical exam an anal check for signs of so-called passive pederasty. While some directors protested that one could not so easily detect the deflowering of a boy, except in cases of violent or long-term abuse, others confidently pursued this practice. One of these was the Naples director who reported that of the 98 boys admitted to the reformatory over the years 1910–1912, 48 or nearly half showed definite signs of passive pederasty. This is a remarkable figure. Leaving aside the question of whether it accurately reflects the experiences of these boys, it is nonetheless significant that the director and physician looked for these signs and found them. Likely what they found corresponded more or less with their expectations. More revealing still are the director's comments:

Many youths come to us with the stigma of depravation . . . (look at their medical certificates), clear proof that many families completely abandon their children, allowing them to wallow in unimaginable filth . . . Most of the boys come to us in a sad moral and physical condition that reveals the corruption and abandonment to which they have been subjected, often in their own family homes.⁷³

The world of the Neapolitan working class—an echo of comments we encountered relative to the Annunziata scandal—is depicted then as a swamp of turpitude in which boys are routinely sexually abused, either because of parental neglect or else, it seems, at the hands of the boys' own relatives. One can only imagine how girls fared in such an environment.⁷⁴ The Neapolitan director, as others, was quick to add that he had taken measures to prevent homosexual activity in the reformatory and cure those inmates who brought the affliction with them to the institution. Arguments

of this sort of course conveniently deflect the suggestion that reformatory life itself might encourage homosexual behavior (or masturbation for that matter, a frequent problem though considered less serious).⁷⁵

* * *

The history of juvenile delinquency in Italy during the decades before World War I parallels and confirms trends we have seen relative to other problems regarding marginalized children. Beginning in the 1890s political concern crescendoed up to about the time of the Committee on Juvenile Delinquency (1909–1912). The momentum for action, however, while it inspired a great deal of study and debate and the drafting of the Minors Code, did not lead to the sorts of measures and reforms for which so many child advocates hoped.

That crescendo was fueled by apparently skyrocketing statistics for juvenile crime, statistics that must have confirmed qualitative observations of young thieves, vagabonds, and prostitutes in Italian cities. Indeed one derives from the professional literature a general perception of a world, an urban world, in which working-class parents have lost control of and interest in their children, certainly as compared to an imagined patriarchal ruralist one in which children were “educated” and kept on a short leash. Proletarian youth instead were “abandoned” in ever greater numbers to their own not-yet-formed senses of morality and so became easy prey for the amorphous evils of the street and city. Nor can it be a coincidence that it is precisely at that moment when the political anxiety about juvenile crime begins to wane that those dramatic statistics come to be viewed more critically and challenged.

Criminal activity, though, was only half the story. It is perhaps remarkable to the present-day observer that by the 1890s as much institutionalization was taking place in Italy because of the fear that children might commit crimes—the incarceration of *discoli* and vagabonds—as for actual criminal acts committed by children (*condannati*). Indeed if we had reliable comparable figures for, say, under 16 year olds, they would certainly reveal larger numbers of children in preventive than in penal incarceration.

Surely Italy resembled other Western states in treating potential child delinquents and lawbreakers in a fundamentally different way from adult criminals. Still, the Italian example does have some special characteristics. The scale of paternal correction, for example, may have been unmatched elsewhere as close to half of incarcerated children in Italy were put there by their parents, clearly a symptom of the difficulty faced by the growing number of parents whose survival tactics also included industrial employment and emigration. At the same time, the burden of paternal correction

on the state seems to have frustrated the drive to rid Italian streets of idle (and so dangerous) youth. In spite of a repressive urge—like that of Fanny Dalmazzo who called for nightly dragnets to rid the streets of vagabond children (Giorgianni 1911)—the state lacked the means or resolve to more forcefully address this issue. Italian bourgeois society instead addressed the problem of vagabondage primarily by means of assistance and childsaving. Childsaving was carried out by private organizations that sprang up throughout Italy in this same period and are explored in chapter 5. And while assistance represents a more humanitarian approach than repression, it too can, as in the Italian case, represent a profound expression of bourgeois anxiety.

Salviamo il fanciullo!

“It is deplorable that in this our Italy misery is such that some individuals force young children to beg in the streets, children dressed in rags and who are so hungry and malnourished they cannot help but inspire compassion.” (Onorevole Francesco Coccapieller to fellow *garabaldino* and Prime Minister Francesco Crispi [ACS PCM 1888, b. 73, f. 1.7.965])

“In the streets of Rome one sees boys and girls wandering about, and one’s heart goes out to them . . . In the evening they wander alone in certain streets. Nor will I tell you what happens to them there for the very mention of it is repulsive . . .” (Comments of Coccapieller in the Italian Chamber of Deputies [Atti C. disc. March 8, 1888, 1229])

“Many are the children who filthy and dressed in rags wander about the city. The boys offer you matches and the girls flowers. You find them in specific places, like the tram station in Piazza Venezia. And there are so many of them that they block your way with an insistence that borders on impertinence. I have even seen them numb with cold in the dead of winter waiting outside of the theaters for the end of the show in hopes of obtaining a few coins. The newspapers write about this mass of small beggars, posing as sellers of matches and flowers, describing them as a discredit to the nation. Foreigners indeed are amazed that the authorities do not take measures to deal with this problem.” (Pio Blasi, director of the Rome foundling home,¹ in the *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* [1896]: 109)

“And how many children do we see every evening stretching out their palms or sleeping in doorways? Winter or summer it’s the same; and what tears most at the heart is that the poor urchin often gets that *soldo* from a willing passerby, but 5 or 6 steps away waits his wicked mother or, worse still, a wicked *padrone* who, forcing the child to beg, uses the little one as a tool in his evil trade.” (Comments of Ettore Socci in the Italian Chamber of Deputies [Atti C. disc. May 27, 1901, 4406])

“The exploitation of children in this city and their total abandonment, day and night, is such that they often sleep outside in the streets and squares. Many of those between the ages of 6 and 14 are employed in the public markets as basket carriers and for a *soldo* or two make long voyages . . .” (Description of Catania from the city’s prefect in Commissione per la statistica 1902, 84)

"Miserable children . . . all around the age of 10 wandering among the tumult of the city. Castoffs from schools, from workshops, and from poor and broken families who turn them out onto the streets. Born of no spiritual bond but the product instead of brutish sensual satisfaction, their parents have neither the interest nor the ability to worry about their future. And so they grow up, unhappy creatures in the midst of sadness, hardship and deprivation, lacking both moral guidance and material aid. They are surrounded by numberless temptations and the constant spectacle of shameful behavior and iniquity.

"They have a leader, never older than 15, and spend most of their day idling on the sidewalks and bothering passersby; they keep their eyes open for the right moment and dive under the tables among the clients of a caffè to retrieve a cigarette or other trash." (Raffaele Majetti's recollection of ca. 1905 Rome as reported by his son in Majetti 1932, 66–7)

"No, the children of the people among us do not grow up in the school room but begging instead in the streets, turning the crank on a barrel-organ, tending their flocks in the hills and the forests, working 12 or 14 hours in the workshops or the sulfur mines or the glass factories . . . How many are the Italians among the one and three-quarter million children aged 5 to 10 killed in the factories of the United States, forced to perform tasks beyond their strength, in unhealthy environments, under the control of greedy and cruel traffickers? What a dark blemish on the name of our nation. What an embarrassment for a motherland that, unable to protect and defend its children, shows itself to be instead a cruel stepmother." (*Rassegna Nazionale*, April 16, 1907)

"That band of young ne'er do wells that a few years ago wandered the streets of the city, committing the occasional act of hooliganism, has today become a well-disciplined army . . ." (On the successes of the Associazione Luigi Cislighi for boys discharged from reformatories in Milan as recounted by the association's secretary Annibale Membretti in 1910 [Membretti 1910])

"It is time that our beautiful 100 cities be freed of those bands of insolent, disruptive, ragged guttersnipes who infest our streets, perennial insult to the proud triumphs of modern civilization." (Giuseppe Cesare Pola in his inaugural address to the Second National Congress of the *Patronato* Societies for Minors and Convicts in 1912 [Pola 1912, 4])

"What then are we bothering to reconstruct if the "children of no-one" on our streets still number in the thousands? They grow up in the vilest of moral filth and, especially in the major cities, are trained in the most brutal behavior you can imagine, contributing ultimately to our shocking levels of crime, vice and rebellion." (From Ugo Conti's address to the National Congress for the Assistance of Abandoned and Wayward Children, May 1923 [Conti 1923, 242])

Passages like these, chosen more or less at random, provide eloquent testimony to the presence of children on Italian city streets. That presence was significant, noted by Italians and foreigners alike, and a source of concern throughout the country. In 1898, for example, police picked up 2500 children “abandoned” in the streets and took them to some sort of refuge (Raseri 1899, 125). Nor is Coccapieller writing to Crispi about a new phenomenon in 1888. Children must have inhabited Italian streets as long as there were Italian streets to inhabit. There is, however, reason to believe that in the late nineteenth century there were more of those children. Just as political unification and improved transportation had made it easier for adults to move about, so must the mobility of children have increased. We have already seen other signs of that mobility, concern about ambulant professions in the 1870s and other aspects of child emigration in the decades that followed. We also know that Italian cities grew dramatically in the nineteenth century. Naples, Europe’s third largest city at the time of the French Revolution, grew a mere 70 percent by the eve of World War I, while Rome more than tripled in that same period and Milan grew by a factor greater than four. Moreover, upwards of one-third of the population was under 15 (ISTAT 1976, 12; Mitchell 1980, 87–8). So even if the percentage of urban children who lived in the streets was unchanged, the total number would increase. But probably that percentage did increase. As we see below, the fact of parents and especially mothers working outside of the home in cities spawned the Italian *asilo* or infant school movement in the 1830s for 2–6 year olds, and the latter half of the century would see efforts to institutionally care for unminded children extend to both younger and older ages. We have also seen signs of an increased demand for child labor; and employment, especially when it inspires migration and urbanization as it did in the period here explored, inevitably also brings unemployment. Larger numbers of unemployed children then also contributed to the street children population of Liberal Italy described in the above passages.

So it is likely that the perception of the street children problem after about 1880 was fueled by larger numbers. It was also the product of many of the same social psychologies reviewed in earlier chapters, including a new attitude about the responsibility of the state vis-a-vis children and concern about the image Italy projected abroad and to foreign visitors. That combination of factors contributed to a broad save the children movement that gathered momentum through the 1890s and into the twentieth century. That movement of course took a cue from similar movements in other countries, especially the United States, Great Britain,

and France. Its timing, however, was a function of Italian realities, and its various characteristics, its successes, and its failures were particular to Italy: the interaction of lay and religious movements, for example; the relative accomplishments achieved in Milan (see Membretti's comments); and defeat of the 1907 Bill for the Protection of Morally-Abandoned Youth. Nor it would seem, judging from Conti's comments, had the problem gone away by the postwar period.

Asili

The Italian save the children movement had as its prelude the *asilo* movement and as its complement the introduction and expansion of mandatory school attendance. The *asilo* movement focused on weaned children from about ages two to six, namely those ages after which children might well leave the constant care of their mothers, between weaning and school or work. It is a prelude because, like the save the children movement, it offered an institutional alternative for children whose parents could not care for them. Like charitable works in general, it sought both to offer assistance and to advance a particular ideology. That ideology might be Catholic, capitalist, or even Socialist and informed the methods adopted or proposed for child care in the *asili*. On the other hand, the *asilo* movement differed from the save the children movement insofar as children so young could hardly be considered much of a threat to public order and social integrity if left to their own devices, except insofar as early neglect might encourage asocial behavior later in life.

Catarsi and Genovesi (1985) have written about the *asilo* movement in Italy. Its pioneer was Ferrante Aporti, a priest who founded the first Italian charitable *asilo* in Cremona in 1830.² Aporti had been exposed in particular to British pedagogical ideas and the tradition of infants' schools begun in Great Britain a decade or so before. By 1830, in fact, philanthropists of various stripes were founding nursery schools in various national contexts and the restoration period (1815–1848) generally saw the growth of that movement. Italian sources, for example, refer to precedents and contemporary movements in, at least, England, Switzerland, France, and Germany.³

In Italy, following Aporti's example, *asili* were founded in many cities of Tuscany, Lombardy, and Piedmont (as well as the smaller northern states) in the 1830s and 1840s. Rome too got *asili* in the late 1840s. Election of the more social-minded Pius IX in 1847 seems to have overcome previous episcopal opposition to the institution.⁴ With a few

exceptions, the development of *asili* in the South instead came largely after unification. Many of the early initiatives, like Aporti's, were the work of priests, and religious education or catechism figured prominently in Aporti's program, together with physical education, manual skills of a utilitarian nature, and the rudiments of reading and arithmetic.

It was a program to be sure aimed at the production of obedient Catholic workers and citizens. Insofar as it might challenge the integrity or authority of the family, it encountered some opposition from conservative clerics, while generally receiving support from the emerging bourgeois Liberal elite. The inspiration behind the *asilo* movement was, of course, not simply ideological, but responded, in Italy as in the more "advanced" European nations, to a charitable urge to offer protection to a class of children perceived as inadequately cared for. Especially in urban and industrial settings, working-class children might be left during the day with an old woman of the neighborhood, probably illiterate and, by bourgeois standards, lacking the basic notions of hygiene (and perhaps also morality). Aporti and his followers sought to save children from these environments, but not only from these. For frequent were the observations of tiny children left entirely unattended to play in the filthy streets while their parents were off at work, or else of other children left in their miserable homes, perhaps leashed to a bed or other piece of furniture to keep them from worse dangers. The *asilo* movement then sought to both civilize working-class children and protect them from the perils of their own homes and neighborhoods.

Inevitably one wonders why the *asilo* movement came when it did. On a European level, female employment outside the home in urban or industrial settings was on the rise and so the need or demand, to use the economist's term, for child care was increasing. Italy of course lagged behind in terms of industrialization, but participation rates for women were high nonetheless and that combined with the force of example encouraged the establishment of *asili* in Italy. The measurement of female labor is, however, problematic. As the agricultural sector declined (in relative terms at any rate: for example from 70 percent of the active population in 1861 to 56 percent in 1911), overall participation rates for women (presumably close to 100 percent in agriculture) declined. At the same time, the number of women working in cities surely increased, if only because of rapid urbanization. As reviewed above, Italy's principal cities grew rapidly in the nineteenth century. And as one other index, according to an 1876 survey, Italy's tiny population of factory workers (almost exclusively in textiles) were nearly half women (and almost 1/4 children) (Musso 2002, 22–40). Extrapolating back to pre-unification levels is hard, but it was in the 1840s

that concerns were first expressed in Italy about child labor in the textile mills (see chapter 3). Given the important presence of women in those factories, it is perhaps not a coincidence that the *asilo* movement also got its start at about that time (though admittedly it would be more convenient for this thesis if Aporti had founded his first *asili* in Como rather than Cremona).

At the same time we can detect, as we already have for the latter half of the century, an evolving concept of childhood and of the state. More and more, bourgeois opinion became convinced that it was in its best interests that society, and eventually the state, take over responsibility for the well-being and education of youth. As such it was not only the demand for infant care that was increasing but also its supply. The *asilo* and the elementary school were two prongs of a general strategy to assimilate the popular masses just as those masses began to assert themselves politically. Though in Italy that strategy would not find effective application till after World War I.

In fact, the *asili*, in contrast to elementary schools, remained largely private affairs throughout the period studied here. At the time of unification a few guidelines were set down in the Charitable Works Law of 1862 and in the Casati school reform of 1859.⁵ According to the latter, school inspectors—functionaries of the Ministry of Public Instruction—were to include the *asili* in their purview, though apparently little was ever done in this regard. At the same time, *asili* were classified as charitable works and so depended administratively (verification of their accounts and so on) on the Interior Ministry. Neither ministry seems to have done much about founding new *asili* though both offered limited subsidies for some of them.

Several failed attempts were made to pass an *asilo* law in the decades that followed. That law might have provided some financial support for the *asili*, established pedagogical standards and guidelines, and professionalized the position of the nursery school teacher by requiring that she complete a particular level of schooling (contemporary literature inevitably refers to the teachers/caregivers as women). Funds for the *asili* were instead included in the 1906 Provisions for the Southern Provinces, Sicily, and Sardinia, and the 1911 Daneo-Credaro Law called for the creation of school inspectorates (*patronati scolastici*) in every *comune*; these were meant among other things to promote the founding of *asili*. The issue of *asili* was raised from time to time in parliament, and Credaro as minister of public instruction referred several times to a plan to create many model *asili* in the South. Little, however, was accomplished in this regard.⁶

The *asilo* movement then remained largely a private and local one. Many *asili* were founded by religious orders. Others were the work of lay philanthropic societies who might still employ low-cost nuns to staff the

institutions. Others still were founded by local administrations, especially of the wealthier *comuni* of the North and Center where *asili* continued to be more frequent. As a result their numbers grew steadily if not spectacularly. Catarsi and Genovesi estimate that they grew from 114 in 1843, with about 15,000 children, to over 3,300 by 1910. At the latter date the *asili* accommodated over half a million children or about 25 percent of the age group (Catarsi and Genovesi 1985, 19, 132). It is difficult to know how close these *asili* came to meeting demand, and their quality was variable and often criticized. By the turn of the century, Aporti's approach had generally been superceded and there was considerable debate about nursery school methods, especially those of the Agazzi sisters and of Maria Montessori. But the fact remained that many of the *asili* were staffed by untrained nuns who functioned largely as caretakers with little in the way of pedagogic pretense.

Nonetheless, by the Giolittian era a significant percentage of working-class infants were cared for in *asili*. And the percentage was of course higher in urban and industrial centers of the Center and North. Those urban spaces were the same ones where the save the children movement took hold starting in the 1880s. Given the failure of the state to provide the facilities and human capital needed to enforce the mandatory Elementary School Law of 1877, and the still more limited provision of middle schools, those same private interests that lay behind the growth of the *asilo* movement sought to cope with that class of children as it grew older and contributed to the ranks of street children described at the beginning of this chapter.

Two other aspects of the *asilo* movement merit mention. Beginning in 1850 in Milan, a city always in the vanguard of public health and assistance movements, Italy began to see the founding of *crèches* or *asili* for nursing infants.⁷ These establishments were necessarily located near factories and other places of employment so that women could return to them periodically during the workday to nurse their children. That institution, however, developed slowly. By the turn of the century there were only 21 in Italy including 5 each in Milan and Turin and none South of Rome (Rasari 1899, 46).

Another movement, also apparently initiated in Milan (in 1866) sought to establish *asili* in the surrounding rural communities. Women's participation rates had always been high, perhaps universal, in agriculture, and one can argue that the demand for *asili* in the countryside had always existed but that it was only with the emergence of a potentially threatening urban working class that the bourgeois supply materialized. The rural efforts were predictably limited, especially in the South. In a 1909 investigation of schools and *asili* in Calabria, for example, Gaetano Salvemini

would write: "the babies seem as numerous as the flies and spend their days in the mud and dust of the streets; or else their parents, who go off to work in the fields leave them with their older brothers and sisters who as a result cannot go to school; or else again they are sent to the homes of *donniciole* who watch over them for a modest sum" (Catarsi and Genovesi 1985, 135; Salvemini 1955, 278).

Interesting to note, an *asilo* law was finally passed in 1923, after the Fascist seizure of power and just two weeks after the similarly long-awaited Foundling Law referred to in chapter 1. The *asilo* law sought to define the pedagogic mission of the *asili* by means of more direct supervision on the part of the Ministry of Public Instruction. It also established educational standards for teachers in the *asili* and created six institutes for training them. The ministry was also given a new budget for *asili*, though likely most of that got used up in funding the six new training colleges. As Catarsi and Genovesi observe, great strides were not made during the Fascist *ventennio*.⁸

Salviamo il fanciullo!

Although the save the children movement in Italy traces its roots to Catholic organizations from the mid-nineteenth century, it really took off in the 1880s and 1890s with the founding of numerous important lay and private societies and the creation of institutional refuges for a new subject, the "morally abandoned" child. The momentum of the 1890s carried on through to the beginning of the twentieth century as private, lay, and religious groups redoubled their efforts and the state too entered into the fray proposing extensive childsaving legislation. The movement to save Italy's children then coincides precisely with the others we have so far considered: foundling home reform, protection of child emigrants, the antiwhite slavery campaign, the battle against juvenile delinquency culminating in the proposed Minors Code, and measures to regulate child labor. It also completes our overall picture in two ways. First, the new category of "morally abandoned" children was combined with the very old one of "materially abandoned" foundlings in Giolitti's major piece of children's legislation. And second it provided, with that broad and vaguely defined rubric of moral abandonment, an umbrella to cover any other of Italy's dangerous or endangered children not included in those previous categories.

The international childsaving movement started earlier, in the 1820s and 1830s, though one can trace precedents back at least as far as seventeenth-century Germany, Britain, and Italy (see, for example, comments on the Florentine hospice of San Filippo Neri in chapter 4). Nonetheless, the early

nineteenth century saw a transition from isolated instances to a sustained movement that involved most western nations. Childsaving in the United States began in the 1820s and culminated in some sense in Charles Loring Brace's Children's Aid Society (founded in 1859). In Britain private efforts dating from the late eighteenth century were followed up by the Children's Friend Society in 1830 and, as described in the previous chapter, state-run industrial schools in 1857. Parallel to Brace's society in the United States (and to later private efforts in Italy) were the equally well-known Dr. Barnardo's Homes started in Britain in 1871. Similar, mostly private, efforts were scattered through France, Germany, and the rest of Europe.⁹

Childsaving is itself a problematic concept. Most often the intention was to *prevent* children from falling into criminal ways; for girls that prevention of course also extended to moral corruption and the attempt to save their virginity. Although attempts were made to separate endangered children from those who had already embarked upon a life of crime (and to isolate virgins from deflowered girls), that distinction was not always easy, reasonable, or defensible. And insofar as vagabondage, idleness, and begging were technically crimes, the distinction became still more difficult; childsaving institutions inevitably overlapped with those intended to *reform* corrupt and criminal youth (like those described in chapter 4).

An alternative approach lay in evaluation not so much of whether or not the youth had turned the corner of criminal (or idle) behavior, but instead of the causes that lay behind that evolution. In particular, there emerged the figure of the "morally-abandoned child" who, product of his unfortunate environment, stood in marked contrast to the positivist born criminal. According to one French observer, the term morally abandoned was coined by a Polish judge in the 1830s (Lallemand 1885, 66–9). By the 1880s it had gained currency in French and Italian discussions, though apparently never got much use in Anglo-American circles. Indeed a look at the names and statutes of French and Italian childsaving institutes reveals that the abandoned child, together with the mistreated or abused child, was the principal target of the movement in those countries. That language revealed a significant shift of focus and culpability from the delinquent child himself to the neglectful parent, a shift evident also in the title of works like Lino Ferriani's 1893 *Madri snaturate* or *Heartless Mothers*.¹⁰

Children could be abandoned in several ways. To begin with, they could be "materially" abandoned at birth, hence the conflation of foundling and childsaving legislation to which we return below. Another form of abandonment, material but often assumed moral as well, was that suffered by the children of prison convicts who, like abusive parents, might be deprived of *patria potestà* (though rarely were). Finally, the more strictly moral abandonment was that suffered by the children of drunks, prostitutes,

vagabonds and the like, and those children “left to freely wander the streets and *piazze*, without guidance, without moral support, without affection and without love” (Donetti 1907, 28–9). In some sense the morally abandoned were those marginalized children who had fallen through the cracks, not belonging to any of the other groups for whom institutional solutions had been devised: orphans, foundlings, paternal correction cases, and so on. Ugo Conti offered the following definition at the 1896 International Childhood Conference in Florence: “minors who lack any guidance (*cure educative*) and who risk corruption because of the inability of parents or family to care for them, whether because of straitened circumstances, cruelty, or vice.”¹¹

Morally-abandoned children then presumably constituted a majority of street children observed by commentators like those quoted at the beginning of this chapter. We get a more detailed look at those children from a little-known work by L. Milazzo entitled *Nella strada* (*In the Street*). Milazzo, something of an Italian Mayhew, opens his work with a vivid description of the inherent immorality and corrupting influence of the city streets and the alleyways of working-class neighborhoods. In those urban spaces, following Milazzo’s descriptions, one encounters women conducting small groups of pale, emaciated, filthy, half-naked children, surely not their own:

These hags operate a trade in the unfortunate creatures whose value moreover is the greater the more they are deformed. The women pay a small fee to the children’s heartless mothers or even buy them outright, as though they were discarded merchandise, only to rent them out at triple the price to others who send them out to beg alms from passersby who take pity on them. (Milazzo 1913, 15)

Milazzo then goes on to offer a hierarchy of street children, starting with these unfortunate beggars. The next group up the ladder are the scavengers who scamper around the city with a basket or sack under their arms gathering anything of value from among the urban refuse. They too are usually at the mercy of a wicked step-mother-like figure who collects their meager earnings. Then come the chimney sweeps (still described as coming from the Alpine Valleys) and the wandering street hawkers offering postcards, matches, candles, shoe laces, and the like. Most of these latter are operating without a license and so have to keep an eye out for the police, the sort of deception that constitutes a first step into the world of criminality; the second step often consists of adding stolen goods to their wares. Finally Milazzi describes the porters or those bands of dirty, ragged children that assault travelers disembarking from ship or train in hopes of carrying

a bag or doing some other service for a tip, an activity he characterizes as halfway between work and begging.¹² It is hard to evaluate the degree to which Milazzo's comments were based on observation and study as opposed to the repetition of standard characterizations—the observation regarding chimney sweeps strikes one as a bit out of date—but certainly it seems unlikely that he would have published such a work in 1913 if the problem of street children were not still a pressing one.

That problem, like the need for *asili*, seems to have first been identified in Italy by clerics. A precursor in this regard was don Bosco of Turin (later Saint Giovanni Bosco) who in 1850 founded a charitable Society for Poor and Abandoned Children and in 1859 the Salesian order whose primary goal remains the Christian education of youth. In addition to the oratories where don Bosco gathered his young followers, he (and later his order) also founded hospices for needy children and workshops where they might be usefully employed (Stella 2000). By the time of don Bosco's death in 1888 there were over 1000 Salesian brothers and 57 Salesian foundations in Europe and South America.

A look at the list of childsaving institutions in table 5.1 gives us some idea of the subsequent chronology of childsaving in Italy. The data included there were not collected in any systematic way but derive from references to founding dates of a variety of organizations (and also dates of a few conferences and some legislation) encountered in the course of my research. Several non-Italian examples are included for comparison. International congresses, for example, for the protection of children were held in Stockholm (1878) and Paris (1883), while the first Italian congress was held in 1896. In addition to the earlier American Children's Aid Society (1859) and British Dr. Barnardo's Homes (1871), French efforts to save morally abandoned children may have been the most influential in Italy. The Paris (Seine) Service des enfants moralement abandonnés was founded in 1881; and in 1889 France passed a Law for the Protection of Mistreated and Morally-Abandoned Children.¹³

Perhaps thanks to the example of don Bosco, Turin also led the way in lay efforts at childsaving. In 1871, for example, the same year Dr. Barnardo initiated his efforts in London, Turin founded an agricultural colony for 10–14 year olds in danger of leading a vagabond or idle life, thanks to a bequest of a wealthy philanthropist (Istituto Bonafous). And in 1888 Luigi Martini founded his Charitable Home for Young Derelicts (*Casa benefica per i giovani derelitti*) in Turin, that provided temporary refuge for boys and girls aged 7–16 “abandoned for any reason and without the means to provide for themselves.” The intention was to place these children in apprenticeships with local merchants and industrialists (Conti 1895; Raseri 1895, 47).

Table 5.1 Childsaving Institutions and dates

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>*</i>
Istituto dei discoli S. Maria della pace	Milano	1841	f
Buon pastore	Torino	1843	f
Istituto del patronato	Milano	1845	f
Soc. patrocinio liberati carcere	Torino	1846	f
Associazione carita' a pro' dei giovani poveri, orfani ed abbandonati	Torino	1850	f
Sacra famiglia	Torino	1853	f
Children's Aid Society	New York	1859	f
Salesian order founded	Torino	1859	f
Istituto Casanova	Napoli	1864	f
Istituto dei fanciulli derelitti	Milano	1864	f
Societa' protettrice dell'infanzia	Paris	1865	f
Pia Casa di patronato per i minorenni corrigendi	Firenze	1871	f
Sale di lavoro per giovanetti abbandonati	Trieste	1871	f
Dr. Bernardo's homes	London	1871	f
Istituto Bonafous	Lucento	1871	f
Comitato di patronato per i minorenni liberati dalle carceri	Napoli	1876	f
Patronato ragazzi vagabondi e viziosi	Venezia	1877	f
Union internationale des amies de la jeune filles	Neuchâtel	1877	f
Congress for the protection of children	Stockholm	1878	
Ist. VEII orfani e derelitti	Padova	1878	f
Sacra famiglia	Roma	1878	f
Ospedale S. Margherita	Roma	1879	f
Société générale de protection de l'enfance abandonnée ou coupable	Paris	1879	f
Service des enfants moralement abandonés	Paris	1881	f
Società per la protezione dei fanciulli	Mantova	1881	f
Industrial home for destitute boys	Venezia	1881	f
Società (italiana) per la protezione dei fanciulli	Milano	1881	f
Congrès international de la protection de l'enfance	Paris	1883	
Scuola-officina per fanciulli abbandonati	Genova	1884	f
Societa' amici dell'infanzia	Trieste	1884	f
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children	London	1884	f
Societa' italiana protettrice dei fanciulli	Firenze	1885	f
Istituto pio figli della previdenza	Milano	1885	f
Soc. paterna di mutua assicurazione degli orfani e di patrocinio all'infanzia abbandonata	Roma	1886	f
Immacolata concezione	Bologna	1886	e
Union française pour la défense ou la tutelle des enfants maltraités ou en danger moral	Paris	1887	f
Casa patronato fanciulli oziosi e vagabondi	Treviso	1887	f
Asilo per l'infanzia abbandonata	Roma	1887	e
Educatorio bambini poveri	Roma	1888	f
Istituto Savoia per l'infanzia abbandonata	Roma	1888	f

Table 5.1 Continued

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>*</i>
Opera delle orfane abbandonate	Napoli	1888	e
Casa benefica pei giovani derelitti	Torino	1888	f
Law for the protection of mistreated and morally abandoned children	France	1889	
Società inglese per la protezione dell'infanzia maltrattata	London?	1889	e
Società protettrice dei fanciulli abbandonati e maltrattati	Bologna	1889	f
Asilo giovanetti abbandonati	Siena	1889	f
Alleanza universale per l'infanzia	Firenze	1890	f
Società nazionale di protezione dell'infanzia	Roma	1894	f
Ricovero di fanciulli vagabondi a S. Maria delle Grazie	Roma	1894	f
Comité de défense	Brussels	1894	f
Istituto per l'infanzia abbandonata	Padova	1895	f
Casa paterna Ravaschieri	Napoli	1895	f
Conferenza "L'infanzia abbandonata"	Firenze	1895	
Amies de la jeune fille, Comitato italiano	Roma?	1896	f
Congresso int. per l'infanzia	Firenze	1896	
Associazione Nazionale per la difesa della fanciullezza abbandonata	Milano	1896	f
Marchiondi-Spagliardi	Milano	1897	e
Opera pia per assistere i figliuoli derelitti dei condannati			
Madonna di Pompei	Napoli	1897	f
Association catholique internationale pour la protection de la jeune fille	Fribourg	1897	f
Congresso Opere Pie	Torino	1898	
Casa della provvidenza	Roma	1898	e
Soc. naz. Pro Infanzia	Roma	1898	f
Società torinese "pro pueritia"	Torino	1899	f
Scuola mozzi inf. abb.	Livorno	1899	
Associazione per la difesa giuridica dei minorenni traviati, giudicabili e delinquenti	Milano	1900	f
Comitato tratta delle bianche	Roma	1901	f
Comitato italiano contro la tratta delle bianche	Roma	1901	f
Sala deposito fanciulli abbandonati	Milano	1901	f
Primo Cong. Naz. Pro Infanzia	Torino	1901	
Asilio Mariuccia	Milano	1901	f
Comitato per la difesa giuridica dell'infanzia e della fanciullezza abbandonata	Milano	1902	e
Ospizio fanciulli abbandonati	Catania	1902	f
1o Congresso Nazionale "Pro Infanzia"	Torino	1902	
Associazione per la difesa igienica della prima infanzia	Milano	1904	f
Dormitorio per le minorenni a Roma	Roma	1904	f
Congresso "Pro Infanzia"	Brescia	1904	
Casa materna orfani e abbandonati	Napoli	1904	f
Istituto pedagogico forense di Milano	Milano	1905	e
Albergo dei fanciulli Umberto I	Genova	1906	f
IV Congresso int. d'assistenza pubblica e privata	Milano	1906	

continued

Table 5.1 Continued

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>*</i>
Patronato dei minorenni condannati condizionalmente	Roma	1906	f
Comitato di difesa dei fanciulli di Torino	Torino	1906	f
Colonie estive per i fanciulli di Roma	Roma	1907	f
Casa di deposito per fanciulli abbandonati	Milano	1907	f
Associazione Luigi Cislighi	Milano	1907	f
Ufficio assistenza bambini vagabondi e accattoni	Firenze	1907	f
Fed. Istituzioni Torino assistenza minorenni poveri	Torino	1908	f
Comitato di difesa dei minorenni tradotti in giustizia	Torino	1908	f
I Cong. naz. delle donne italiane	Roma	1908	
Patronato dei minorenni condannati condizionalmente	Firenze	1908	f
Segretariato femminile per la protezione della giovane	Roma	1908	f
Casa di lavoro per le giovani derelitte	Bologna	1908	f
Patronato dei minorenni condannati condizionalmente in Milano	Milano	1908	f
1o Cong. meridionale pro infanzia	Bari	1909	
Rifugio Ufficio d'Assistenza	Firenze	1910	f
Rifugio Majetti	Roma	1910	f
Patronato dei minorenni condannati condizionalmente	Bologna	1911	f
I Cong. naz. dell'associazione "per la donna"	Roma	1911	
Comitato di soccorso alle opere di salvazione dei minorenni infelicitissimi	Roma	1911	e
Lega nazionale per la protezione della prima infanzia	Firenze	1912	f
Associazione Pro Infanzia Marsala	Marsala	1912	f
Comitata lucchese pro infanzia	Lucca	1912	e
Associazione per le madri e per i bimbi	Napoli	1913	e
Soc. protettrice dell'infanzia	Udine	1913	e
Congresso nazionale Associazione internazionale per la protezione della giovane	Livorno	1914	
Consorzio per l'assistenza della prima infanzia	Milano	1914	f
Associazione internazionale per la protezione della giovane, Italian chapter	Torino	?	
Società nazionale di patronato e mutuo soccorso per le giovani operaie	Torino	?	

Note: * founded(f) or existing(e).

It is no surprise that Italian childsaving got its start in Turin, one of the country's most advanced industrial centers, and generally speaking the Italian childsaving initiatives reviewed here were concentrated in the Center and North. In one notable and early exception, the Neapolitan philanthropist Alfonso di Casanova founded an institute that carried his name and, starting in about 1870, began taking in poor Neapolitan children after they left the *asili* and providing them with both elementary school instruction and professional training in the institute's workshops. By 1879 the Istituto Casanova had over 300 6 to 15-year-old pupils (Giusso 1877; Gurgo di Castelmenardo 1879; Platy 1877).

Important initiatives were of course also undertaken in Milan. Notable among those was the Charitable Institute for the Children of Providence (Pio istituto per i figli della provvidenza) founded by another cleric, Carlo San Martino, in 1885. San Martino's effort was limited in scope—he took in 370 children in the first decade—but much imitated. Its notoriety rested in part on San Martino's timely and dramatically titled *Salviamo il fanciullo!* (*Save the Children!*) of 1895. In that well-received work, San Martino insisted (as had don Bosco) on the need to prevent rather than punish/repress juvenile crime. The abandoned child had to be gotten to (and possibly institutionalized) before being corrupted by his environment, parents, or, worst of all, incarceration, after which experience there was little hope of reform. San Martino's institute then took in the morally abandoned, but not delinquents who had already been convicted of criminal activity. Most importantly, San Martino (like C. L. Brace and Dr. Barnardo) insisted on the need to deprive neglectful or abusive parents of their *patria potestà*. He, along with other child savers, especially bemoaned the practice of some parents (already encountered in parental correction cases) who reclaimed their children from institutional refuges like the Pio Istituto as soon as those children became old enough to make a financial contribution to the family (Figli della provvidenza 1933; San Martino 1895).

One of San Martino's champions was the prosecutor/sociologist/psychologist Lino Ferriani who published a slew of volumes—numbing in their pedantry—on child issues starting in the 1890s. At just the time when penologists and other authors reviewed in chapter 4 were noting the increase in juvenile crime, Ferriani instead focused on the growth of child abuse and crimes against children, especially (the majority in his opinion) those perpetrated by the *Heartless Mothers* of his 1893 title. Like San Martino he called for stiff penalties for child abuse and much more extensive use by the state of measures to deprive neglectful and abusive parents of *patria potestà*. In his 1895 *Minorenni delinquenti* (*Delinquent Youth*) Ferriani praises the work of both Martini in Turin (who had died the year before) and San Martino in Milan and calls for the proliferation of similar institutions. He especially lauds the actions taken by the French child-saving laws and calls on Italy to follow the examples of France and several other nations (Britain, Germany, Sweden, and the United States).¹⁴

Needless to say, initiatives were taken in other Italian cities as well. In Florence, for example, an Italian Society for the Protection of Children (Società italiana protettrice dei fanciulli) was also founded in 1885. Apparently not a hospice, the Florentine society offered clothes, food, medication, and the like for poor children and sought to monitor their attendance at school or work.¹⁵ In Rome, Crispi himself, while prime minister, raised the cry “we must protect the children” (*proteggiamo l'infanzia*)

and sponsored creation of the Savoie Institute for Abandoned Children (Istituto Savoia per l'infanzia abbandonata) in 1888; that institute was soon taking in more than 100 children per year.¹⁶ Just the next year, Crispi instead sent congratulations to the new Society for Abandoned and Mistreated Children (Società dei fanciulli abbandonati e maltrattati) in Bologna. The Bologna society had opened a hospice that in its first six months took in 124 boys and girls between the ages of 3 and 16. In dramatic terms, that society's president described its activities:

The almost daily scenes at our office are a source of both amazement and sadness: pallid, filthy, half-naked mothers whose faces reveal the most miserable sadness together with signs of material and moral suffering. They ask us to come witness the true state of abandonment and abuse in which their five, six, or even seven children live. Children who owe their existence to a barbarous father who, having spawned them has since dedicated himself to drink or been dragged off to prison or else lives a vagabond or fugitive life, leaving his offspring alone on the pavement with nothing.¹⁷

By the time of San Martino's 1895 appeal, there already existed a network of childsaving institutions in the cities of the Center and North, and that appeal in turn inaugurated a particularly intense period in the history of Italian childsaving. One motivation for San Martino's volume had been to create a national association to coordinate these various efforts, and in fact the next year he founded the National Association for the Protection of Abandoned Children (Associazione nazionale per la difesa della fanciullezza abbandonata—ANDFA) headquartered at his own Pio Istituto in Milan. At the same time a group of pediatricians headed by Pio Blasi had conceived of a similar idea and in 1895 founded the National Society for the Protection of Children (Società nazionale di protezione dell'infanzia) in Rome which came to be known as the Pro Infancia. The intent was to foster a proliferation of provincial committees that might combat child abuse and abandonment (including hospices) while also encouraging maternal nursing, infant hygiene, and so on. Archival sources suggest that it succeeded in placing 50–60 abandoned children per year in a host of Roman institutions; it seems still to have been flourishing in 1910. To mark the foundation, Blasi published a remarkable volume entitled *Pro Infancia* that includes some useful information on childsaving institutions as well as an abundance of anecdotes, stories, children's songs, and biographies of child benefactors.¹⁸ The next year, 1896, saw the holding of the first International Children's Conference in Italy (held in Florence), a conference perhaps most notable for its timing and the simple fact that it took place than for any particular initiatives that issued from it (Conti 1896).

Subsequently a national “Pro Infanzia” conference was held in Turin in 1902 (Canalini 1902).

The subsequent history of San Martino’s ANDFA reveals the sort of complications that could attend a humanitarian cause like childsaving. In 1902 San Martino himself declared the initiative a failure and converted the association into a National Committee for the Legal Protection of Abandoned Children (Comitato nazionale per la difesa giuridica dell’infanzia e della fanciullezza abbandonata). Nonetheless, the ANDFA (apparently without San Martino) continued to operate. It opened a Casa di deposito in Milan in 1907 for those abandoned children that neither the foundling home nor Congregazione di Carità could accommodate. In its first three years it took in 829 children, presumably on a short-term basis till they could be placed in more permanent situations. It was national insofar as it took in children from other parts of the peninsula, for example 63 youths orphaned by the 1908 Reggio-Messina earthquake.¹⁹

As the partial list in table 5.1 suggests, childsaving institutes of various sorts proliferated throughout the peninsula after 1895. Some of these were Catholic and others lay. And while some received subsidies from the state (usually as charitable works and so through the Interior Ministry) or local administrations (province, *comune*), most were private initiatives supported by local charity. We can of course identify a number of different approaches. One of these regarded the target population for the childsaving institution. Among the limitations of traditional charitable works was their restriction to certain groups—orphans, former prostitutes, children of convicts—and also the fact that even those intended groups were not always able to find places. The intention instead of hospices like Martini’s in Turin, Ersilia Majno’s Asilo Mariuccia in Milan, or Raffaele Majetti’s Rifugio in Rome was to take in any child in need of protection regardless of family or juridical history (usually, however, with limits of age and perhaps gender). This approach contrasted sharply, for example, with that of San Martino’s Figli di provvidenza where criminal youth were barred for fear they might corrupt the other charges. We return to the Asilo Mariuccia (girls only) below. As to Majetti, we have already encountered him, both in his battle against the *tratta dei fanciulli* in Roccasecca (chapter 2) and as one of Italy’s first judges to specialize in juvenile cases (chapter 4). In 1910 he opened a Rifugio in Rome for minors (over six); intended especially for those released from jails and reformatories and for victims of corrupt home environments, the Rifugio nonetheless proposed to offer a bed to any others who needed one. Majetti’s son would later claim that it was the first of its kind, though that would seem to be an exaggeration (Giannini 1923, 87–91; Majetti 1932, 71–82).

Other institutes did instead specifically target criminal children after their release from prison or reformatory. The fear of course was that these

boys (and girls) would return to their delinquent ways. The Associazione Cislighi (founded 1907) in Milan, for example, was a sort of club for boys who had been in reformatories. As members of the association they could use the reading and game rooms and were required to attend specified activities and conform to a code of behavior. Activities included lessons, professional training, sports, and the like. The association sought to find jobs for its members and place them in foster homes if necessary (Membretti 1910).

The case of minors released from prison or reformatories as well as those on suspended sentences (*condanna condizionale*) was also addressed by the *patronati* discussed in chapter 4, for example Bartlett's in Rome (1906) and Pola's in Turin (1908). The problem of street children was closely linked to that of juvenile delinquency insofar as today's idlers were generally perceived to be tomorrow's delinquents and, given the unfortunate family situations of much institutionalized youth, the only home for many of those leaving the reformatory might be the street. It is no surprise then that the timing of the *patronato* movement coincided with that to "save the children." Bartlett and Pola's initiatives were much imitated in other Italian cities over the next decade or so. Nor did these institutions necessarily restrict themselves to children in trouble with the law as Pola's committee, for example, also sought to address the issue of moral abandonment (Giannini 1923; Pola 1909).

Endangered Girls

Girls of course were less dangerous than boys. The female jail and reformatory population was only 10–20 percent that of boys (see chapter 4), and most descriptions of quasi-criminal bands of children in city streets refer specifically to boys. On the other hand, girls were more vulnerable and so "in danger" than their brothers. That danger was moral, to use the language of the day. It was of course not a new problem, and homes or conservatories for women and girls ("fallen" and not) had existed for centuries. Just the same, in conjunction with the more general save the children movement came a new approach with regard to the efforts to protect girls from prostitution, seduction, and rape. Practically speaking this development was a function of there simply being more girls on the streets. Ideologically instead it reflected evolving ideas about culpability and the risks run by girls who, given the chance, might well avoid a life of vice. In spite of the positivists who at just this time were advancing hypotheses regarding born criminals and prostitutes, other theorists, especially of juvenile crime and corruption like Ferriani and San Martino, were instead emphasizing the

degree to which these youth were victims or products of the unfortunate environments in which they had grown up. Consequently, this new approach emphasized the need to save girls *before* their fall rather than seek to offer them a return to honest life afterward. Clearly this approach was parallel to that of, for example, don Bosco and San Martino, both of who emphasized the need to *prevent* not suppress or punish.

As suggested in chapter 2, the saving of girls in Italian cities overlapped with the battle against the so-called white slave trade both conceptually and institutionally. Again, it was under the auspices of the National Committee to Combat the White Slave Trade that Ersilia Majno founded the Asilo Mariuccia in Milan in 1901. That institution stands out as a significant lay effort to prevent the corruption of endangered young girls by taking them in without any sort of preliminary bureaucratic procedure. Subsequently it was decided whether they should stay in the Asilo itself or else be sent off to another institution (or foster home). Insofar as these girls were perceived to be in imminent danger of moral corruption/deflowering, the saving had to be immediate. As it turned out, in spite of these preventive intentions, most of the early *mariuccine* (as the girls taken in by the Asilo came to be called) were former prostitutes. Though given its often casual nature, prostitution was not always so easily defined.

The history of the Asilo Mariuccia has been well-studied by Buttafuoco. In addition to the many insights she offers about an institute that sought, among other things, to offer an alternative to the confessional nature of most child/girl saving, we learn a great deal about the sexual lives of working-class girls in turn of the century Milan from her study. Initiation/abuse at an early age seems almost to have been the rule, and sexual violence at the hands of employers, family members, and acquaintances a dramatic but fairly typical experience.²⁰ Her revelations correspond well with those, for example, of Jessie White Mario who in her 1877 study of Neapolitan poverty found relaxed attitudes about sexual intercourse and prostitution. As has often been cited, one morgue physician reported to her that: "at the anatomical theater where the corpses of the poor who fail to pay the *mortorio* are dissected, there are no virgins among girls over the age of 12" (White Mario 1978, 48).

The Asilo Mariuccia took in young girls and kept them possibly till majority. As *mariuccine* they were given elementary school instruction as well as training in domestic or industrial occupations. Other initiatives were less elaborate and sought simply to get children off the streets. Already by 1899, for example, there were reportedly 31 public dormitories in Italy (for minors and adults) that took in 145 minors (85 percent boys) that year (Commissione per la statistica 1902, 83–4). A few years later, in 1904 and in response to the sad spectacle of peasant girls come to Rome in

search of work and sleeping under the porticoes, Maria Grassi Koenen opened a dormitory for girls near the train station. Girls could come there day or night and find a bed for a small fee; the intention was that stays be short, and the destitute might be taken in free of charge. In its first year Grassi Koenen's dormitory took in 211 girls; by 1912 that number had grown to 536. The dormitory housed about ten girls per night; they stayed on average 6 or 7 nights. Most found work (often with Grassi Koenen's help) while others either returned home or entered convents. Summer was the dormitories' busiest season. In 1912 Grassi Koenen seconded the work of Judge Majetti (see above) by also taking in some girls just released from prison.²¹

Harking back once again to our earlier discussion of the white slave trade, we saw the emergence of European movements to protect young girls, starting from at least 1877 with the Union Internationale des Amies de la Jeune Fille (of which the Italian national committee dated from 1896). In 1911, following the Paris White Slave Trade Conference of the previous year, Luzzatti (again during his stint as prime minister) queried prefects for:

information on all the committees, societies, *patronati* et cetera that, beyond the general area of charitable work, offer primarily moral and social assistance to girls and women in order to save them from vice and corruption or, if they are already corrupted, reform them.²²

The archival file on this circular includes responses from 61 prefects out of a possible 70 provinces. Those responses are summarized in table 5.2. In column one I have organized the provinces alphabetically within regions West to East and North to South in order to better see the geographical distribution. Columns two and three give founding dates for two specific institutes described below. Column four instead lumps together all institutes mentioned. Provinces with a zero in column four reported no institutes. The few provinces for which there is no response are listed in italics (and column four is left blank). The table gives us then a partial picture of Italian attempts at the time to save girls from seduction, corruption, and the like. The circular itself is problematic as it takes as its premise the existence of a white slave trade. A number of prefects then respond that there are no such committees in their province but neither is there any reason to believe white slaving is taking place there. On the other hand, the many institutions that are mentioned aim to protect girls in general from vice rather than targeting the evasive white slave trade. The result in any case is that there are almost no references to traditional Catholic homes or conservatories for repentant prostitutes. One exception is the Good Shepherd's Institute for

Table 5.2 Protective societies for girls

<i>Province</i>	<i>ACI</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>Total</i>
Alessandria	1903		3
Casale Monf.	1906		
Acqui		+	
Cuneo		1901	2
Saluzzo		+	
Novara	1909	+	?
Torino	1902*	+	4
Genova	1903		1
Porto Maurizio			0
Bergamo			0
Brescia			2
Como			—
Cremona			0
Mantova			0
Milano	1907		9
Monza			0
Pavia			0
Sondrio			0
Belluno			0
Padova			—
Rovigo			0
Treviso			0
Udine			—
Venezia			1
Verona			3
Vicenza	1905		2
Valdagno	+		
Bologna	1905		1
Ferrara	1897?	1909	2
Forlì			0
Modena		1905	5
Formigine		+	
Pievepelago	+		
Spilamberto		+	
Parma			2
Piacenza			0
Ravenna	1911		2
Faenza	1910		
Reggio Emilia			—
Arezzo			0
Firenze			0
Grosseto			0
Livorno	1909		1
Lucca	1902		1
Massa e Carrara			0

continued

Table 5.2 Continued

<i>Province</i>	<i>ACI</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>Total</i>
Pisa	1904		1
Siena			0
Umbria			0
Ancona		1904	1
Ascoli Piceno			0
Macerata			0
Pesaro e Urbino			0
Roma	1904		4
Chieti			0
L'Aquila			0
Teramo			0
Campobasso			0
<i>Avellino</i>			—
Benevento			1
<i>Caserta</i>			—
Napoli			?
Salerno			0
Potenza			0
Bari			0
Capitanata			0
Terra d'Otranto			0
Catanzaro			0
<i>Cosenza</i>			—
Reggio Calabria			0
Caltanissetta			0
Catania			0
Girgenti			0
<i>Messina</i>			—
Palermo			0
Siracusa			0
Trapani			0
Cagliari			0
Sassari			0

Source: ACS INT DGPS Pol. Giud. 1910–12 f. 10900.21

Note: * Bettazzi 1912

Poor Corrupted Girls (Istituto del buon pastore per le povere figlie traviate) in Milan (founded 1845). Instead, almost all the institutes cited date from the previous decade or so, a clear indication that this activity was perceived as new and different.

What does emerge clearly from the responses (and the table) is the remarkable importance of the local committees of the Association catholique internationale pour le protection de la jeune fille (ACI),

founded again in Fribourg in 1897. Out of 59 responses,²³ fully 16 mention the presence of an ACI committee, and usually identify it as the most important such institution. If we consider only Rome and northward the figure is instead 16 out of 43 (or nearly 40 percent), and some provinces report committees in several different cities. The ACI committees were Catholic but seem to have been progressive (perhaps Christian Democratic) in their outlook. They generally offered assistance to girls of all faiths and seem not to have spent much time evangelizing. The national headquarters were in Turin and the committees consisted largely of well-to-do and aristocratic women. Not surprisingly, these committees were well-regarded and respectable. They provided services that varied from place to place but might include the following: an office (*segretariato*) where girls could go to ask for help; placement in jobs and hospices; payment of institutional fees (till majority); recreation halls where girls could pass their time on Sundays and holidays; schools (usually held on Sundays and holidays); and temporary hospices or dormitories. They were supported largely by private contributions. According to one of its own members, the ACI committees were still more widespread than revealed by the circular. Writing in 1912, Rodolfo Bettazzi reported 48 local committees involving about 1800 volunteers helping some 5000 girls per year. The first of these figures is more than double the 20 committees mentioned in the responses to the circular; it may have been that some of the 48 were not sufficiently active to attract official attention. Also not revealed in the responses to Luzzatti's circular (except for Milan) is that nearly half of ACI's contacts took place via its four permanent and nine occasional offices in Italian train stations.²⁴

The only other institute that seems to have achieved a notable degree of coverage was the National Patronato and Self Help Society for Young Female Workers (*Società nazionale di patronato e mutuo soccorso per le giovani operaie*) that existed in 7 provinces (10 cities). This organization too was headquartered in Turin (though its earliest section seems to have been in Ferrara) and had sections in Piedmont and Emilia-Romagna (+Ancona in the Marches). Described as apolitical, the society may have been left-leaning and a lay alternative to the ACI. This society too offered recreation halls, job placement, and schools as well as sickness pay, and free medicines. In Modena it operated a laundry and provided temporary hospice. Like other self-help organizations, girl workers presumably became members and paid dues against the eventual need of assistance.

Beyond these institutions, responses to the circular include references to isolated initiatives of various sorts as well as a few to the Union Amies de la Jeune Fille operating in train stations. The rarity of these latter references, only 4, is surprising, as Gibson, for example, reports sources claiming that by 1902 the Union had spread to 62 Italian *comuni*.²⁵ It may be then that the

enthusiasm that culminated in the 1902 Paris conference to combat the white slave trade had abated by 1911. At the 1912 National Congress of Italian Women (Congresso nazionale della donna italiana—CNDI), Guglielmina Ronconi instead referred to committees in 10 *comuni* (including unusual southern locations: Naples, Messina, Catania) (Ronconi 1912).

Another fact that emerges from the table is the lack of such institutes in more agricultural provinces (rural Lombardy, Venetia) and their virtually complete absence from the *mezzogiorno*. The saving of girls was an urban and mostly northern activity in spite of the fact that, as we saw in chapter 2, the white slave trade, insofar as it existed, drew its victims largely from the South and Sicily and sent them to Mediterranean locations. This aspect of childsaving, though intertwined with the European concern about the kidnapping of girls for prostitution, also reveals a raising of consciousness relative to the sexual abuse of girls, especially of those—ever greater in number—who had left the relative protection of family to seek employment in the Center and North. Predictably then the movement found greatest expansion in the industrial centers of Milan and Turin and the capital city of Rome.

Children and the State

The new attitude of public opinion regarding childsaving revealed by the various private initiatives of the late 1890s and 1900 decade (San Martino, Blasi, Pola, Bartlett, et al.) also encouraged the conviction that the state should play a role in this project. The Charitable Works Congress held in Turin in 1898, for example, passed a resolution affirming the need for the state to protect abandoned youth and assume the cost. That resolution was described as the *first* explicit declaration of a state obligation to protect youth (Commissione della statistica 1902, 110–12). The claim to primacy is likely exaggerated but it reveals nonetheless the perceived novelty of such a proposal and predictably came in just that decade or so characterized by acute anxiety about the fate of children. Other voices could of course be heard, and in 1901 Ersilia Majno (founder of the Asilo Mariuccia and Milanese White Slave Trade Committee) referred to “a new direction emerging on the horizon of state obligations, the need to provide for children who for whatever reason do not receive the care and support they should” (Majno 1903). In 1902 the parliamentarian Ugo Conti insisted on the obligation of the state to provide assistance for morally abandoned children.²⁶ And in 1908 Stefania Omboni at the CNDI could refer to assistance for children as “one of the most burning social questions of our day.” Public awareness had, in her words, “reawakened” (Omboni 1912).

Probably the first formal parliamentary proposal for state assistance for abandoned children in Italy came in 1888 from Francesco Coccapieller (whose letter to Crispi is cited at the opening of this chapter). Given the timing, it is likely that he and the other legislators discussed below had an eye on France where the Law for the Protection of Morally Abandoned Children was first proposed in 1881 and passed in 1889 (Schafer 1997, 67–86). Coccapieller was a controversial if short-lived deputy who had fought with both Giuseppe and Riciotti Garibaldi. A colorful Roman figure, he spoke out on behalf of not just street children—constrained he implies, boys and girls alike, to prostitute themselves—but also those veterans of Italy's struggle for independence (going back to the 1849 battle to defend the Roman Republic in which he took part) who, forgotten by the state, also found themselves reduced to a life of mendicancy in the public spaces of Rome and other cities. In one of his few legislative acts, Coccapieller in 1888 proposed that these two groups be housed together at state expense with the happy consequence that the veterans could impart their wisdom, *Risorgimento* spirit, and so on to the younger charges. Funds for these institutes would come from the government reformatories that he wanted to close down. Coccapieller's proposal, however, never got out of commission.²⁷

Coccapieller, who had served several years in prison for slander, had scant credibility as a legislator, and so it is little surprise that his proposal went nowhere.²⁸ During the following legislature (1891–1892), instead, several more respectable parliamentarians called on the government to take measures to protect abandoned children, and Tullio Minelli, though not a minister, offered his own proposal. Minelli was director of the Rovigo foundling home and author of the innovative reforms carried out there (see chapter 1). His proposal, anticipating those of Blasi and San Martino, called for the creation of a Committee for the Protection of Abandoned and Mistreated Children (*Commissione protettrice dell'infanzia abbandonata e maltrattata*) in every *comune*. Minelli's commissions were to monitor the fate of foundlings but also investigate child abuse and cases where parents or guardians encouraged or permitted their children to lead a vagabond life or engage in immoral pursuits; they were also to offer assistance to child prostitutes and convicts and to abandoned children in general; finally they were to insure enforcement of the 1886 Child Labor Law (and so constitute Luzzatti's hoped-for inspectors—see chapter 3). Minelli's timing was poor, however, as the administration was going through an acute financial crisis. Nicotera, minister of the interior at the time, promised he would take up the issue as soon as the crisis was resolved. As we have seen once before, however, relative to child labor, Nicotera's tenure was too short to allow fulfillment of these sorts of promises.²⁹

In the Minelli proposal, abandonment (*infanzia abbandonata*) had referred to both foundlings and neglected and abused children. In a subsequent and curious proposal the term was applied to children sent out to mercenary wet nurses. Apparently impressed by French legislation aimed at combating what was perceived across the Alps as a form of infanticide, Ugo Conti, who would be an active promoter of child-saving legislation over the next three decades, proposed a law to regulate the entrusting of children under age 12 to wet and dry nursing. The phenomenon, though, was much less widespread in Italy than in France and, as Giolitti pointed out, the cause of high Italian infant mortality was poverty not mercenary wet nursing. During the Chamber of Deputies discussion, Cornelio Guerci rejected Conti's proposal as wholly inadequate:

The legislator must embrace the whole of the problem; he must offer assistance to orphans, to foundlings, to the offspring of heartless mothers, and to the children of poor and derelict mothers as well. Only then can we affirm a higher principle by means of which the state will replace the family and, donning the charitable mantle of protector, eliminate that desperation that inhabits our streets.

Guerci's comments are notable both for a more global view of the child abandonment problem and for a typically far-left view of the future role of the expanded state.³⁰

In 1896, so not long after San Martino's appeal of *Salviamo il fanciullo!*, Minelli raised the issue in parliament once again asking what the government intended to do about assistance for illegitimate children and protection of *morally*—possibly the first use of the term in parliament—abandoned and mistreated children.³¹ About a year later, Conti proposed new and much expanded legislation. Apparently he had taken Guerci's criticism to heart (and perhaps used Minelli's earlier proposal as a model) as the new bill specifically targeted the abuse, neglect, and corruption of children by their parents or guardians. It called for the creation in each *comune* of a Commission for the Protection of Minors (*Commissione di protezione dei minorenni*) but allowed as how that function might be filled by a section of the National Society for the Protection of Abandoned Children (*Società nazionale di protezione dell'infanzia abbandonata*, presumably the organization created by Pio Blasi in Rome the year before) or some other charitable institute. In addition to child abandonment, the proposal included sections on wet nursing and foundling homes. The latter section stipulated elimination of the turning cradles and direct consignment (see chapter 1).³²

Conti's second proposal came seven months after the outbreak of the Annunziata scandal described in chapter 1, an event that influenced both

the proposal and its eventual fate. In fact, that proposal got no further as legislative attention turned to the Foundling Investigation that followed the Annunziata revelations. That investigation lasted from 1897 to 1900. At its conclusion, Pelloux's short-lived second administration presented a bill that addressed exclusively the issue of foundlings. However, the government fell the following month and so the bill never came up for discussion.³³

Presentation of the foundling legislation coincided with two other issues we have already explored: initiation of the emigration law debate (January 1896—December 1901) that came to include articles on minor-age emigration for dangerous occupations, wandering trades, and prostitution, and the explosion of interest in the white slave trade that culminated in the 1902 conference in Paris. It would seem then that the measure of legislative attention allowed for social issues relative to children was for the time fully taken up with other problems. The issue of state-sponsored childsaving was instead revived late in 1902 when Giolitti, at the beginning of his long tenure as prime minister, issued a circular and questionnaire on the issue of public assistance for children.³⁴ In that circular Giolitti returns to the formula of both Minelli and Conti insofar as he includes both material abandonment (and so foundlings) as well as moral abandonment. He also reveals a new official attitude that would characterize his administration, namely a more developed concept of the obligations of state assistance (as opposed to charity):

There are tasks that go beyond the sphere of simple Christian charity and number instead among *society's obligations to its members and to itself as a collectivity*. These tasks include assistance for children, whether materially abandoned by their parents or else morally abandoned and so driven to vice, corruption and begging; the protection of youth from abuse and mistreatment by inhuman parents; the fight against those physical afflictions that most threaten the growth of children; and instruction and proper upbringing in those cases where the child does not find them at home. Nothing is more decisive and important for over-all social well being than the physical and moral health of youth, the key to all our hopes for the future.³⁵

The questionnaire reveals the breadth of Giolitti's conception of the child issue. The categories of children (*infanzia*) covered include: foundlings, material abandonment caused by poverty or the absence of parents, morally-abandoned children encouraged by their parents in mendicancy, vagabondage, or corruption, abused children, children of imprisoned parents, poor children and orphans, mentally retarded children, blind children, and deaf-mute children. For each of these categories the prefect is asked what sort of assistance exists in his province, to give details about existing institutes, to provide statistics on children assisted, and to estimate

the population of children who might be in need of assistance. Under the heading of complementary assistance, the circular further asks for information on *presepi* (day care) for nursing and weaned infants, *asili*, recreation halls (presumably of the sort maintained by the ACI and others), and the public and private institutes, societies, and the like that provide any sort of assistance for children.³⁶

Giolitti's administration gathered responses to the circular and in June 1904 he referred in parliament to an already prepared bill on abandoned children. That reference came during discussion of a new law creating Provincial Public Welfare Commissions that took over the administration of public assistance from the Provincial Administrative Council (*Giunta provinciale amministrativa*—GPA; the Neapolitan GPA, for example, had initiated the *Annunziata* investigation described in chapter 1). Giolitti preferred to first pass this more general welfare legislation and then later address its various parts. In fact, the 1904 legislation did include a specific article on the protection of abandoned children, and the commissions' functions were to include overseeing of the care of orphans, abandoned children, and foundlings, encouraging the creation of municipal *patronati* for morally and materially abandoned youth; generally guarding against child abuse and reporting cases of parents who should be deprived of *patria potestà* and ensuring enforcement of the Child Labor Law. Potentially most significant of all, the article specified that at least 1/3 of the budget of *general* public welfare institutions be dedicated to poor children. This latter measure was several times reinforced in subsequent years, likely a sign of its scant observation. The law's wording in fact allowed it to be fairly easily side stepped.³⁷ Ultimately, article 6 of the 1904 Welfare Law constituted the whole of Liberal Italy's childsaving legislation. As in other cases reviewed in previous chapters, grander plans to emulate the institutions and legislation of the more advanced European states ultimately came to naught.

Giolitti finally presented the Law on Materially and Morally-Abandoned Youth (referred to in the 1904 discussion) to parliament in May 1907.³⁸ The 1907 bill was the most developed, progressive, and potentially expensive childsaving proposal of the Liberal period. As already reviewed in chapter 1, it made its way through the Senate and was approved by a margin of 62–11 in December. Presented immediately to the Chamber of Deputies, it went into committee for one year; the committee expressed fiscal reservations and presented its version in December 1908 just one month before the end of the legislature. Those reservations seem to have ensured that the law was not re-presented in subsequent legislatures.³⁹

The 1907 proposal consisted of a section on foundlings and another on abandoned children.⁴⁰ Predictably, it covered both material abandonment

(parents dead, disappeared, or institutionalized) and moral abandonment. To qualify as morally abandoned, the parents had to be deprived of *patria potestà*, for example according to the series of already existing measures on child abuse, corruption, and the like. These measures had been little enforced at the time but clearly the intent of the legislator was that the state exert greater surveillance and discipline in this area. Other crimes of a moral nature (drunkenness, prostitution) could also lead to the denial of *patria potestà* as could irregular, but noncriminal conduct or mistreatment that endangered the morality or security of the child. In each province it was the prefect who was to take responsibility for the protection of abandoned children, and this last measure meant that he could move against parents even in the absence of convictions for other violations. In either case the intent was to second the efforts of existing child-saving institutions whose responsibility it was to provide for abandoned children till the age of 12 for boys and 14 for girls. Should those institutions be unable to provide that care—and here lay the fiscal innovation of the law—the cost would be covered 60 percent by the state, 20 percent by the province, and 20 percent by the *comune*. If the prefects should take an energetic approach to the problem—recall the crowds of street children described in this chapter's opening passages—the costs could become considerable indeed. The law further reaffirmed that the state would shoulder the cost of confining child idlers, vagabonds, beggars, and prostitutes in reformatories.

The law was of course presented in the Giolittian spirit identified above according to which the state bore an obligation “to remove these tender buds from the public street, easy victims of delinquency and evil.” In particular, private charity lacked the means to save children from unfit or abusive parents and so the authority of the state was required.⁴¹ The Senate presentation cited statistics gathered as a result of Giolitti's 1902 circular and so provides something of a snapshot of the situation at the time. About 1/4 of all *comuni* reportedly provided child-saving services, and the total number of abandoned children already receiving assistance in 1901 exceeded 25,000 at a cost of about 6 million lire. To this number had to be added another 46,000 orphans and 12,000 children confined to reformatories. The presentation also cites numbers for *presepi* (3,500), nursing subsidies (7,600) and *asili* (250,000) as well as blind, deaf, and retarded children to estimate a total expenditure for child assistance of about 50 million lire (about 262 million 2002US\$). These figures do not include the over 100,000 foundlings supported by the various foundling institutions.⁴²

Senate discussion of the law was uneventful, as suggested by its easy passage. Interesting for our purposes, at one point the penalist Emilio Brusa called for the addition of another section of the law to deal with juvenile delinquency.⁴³ Brusa's conception essentially tied together all the issues we

have studied in this book, reinforcing our assertion that together they defined a universe of contemporary child anxiety. The Chamber of Deputies Commission, while generally applauding the legislation raised several concerns. Provincial estimates (again presumably from responses to the 1902 questionnaire) suggested that the number of morally and materially abandoned children potentially covered by the law was about 80,000 and assistance would cost about 16 million lire. The commission in any case thought these estimates low. It further observed that the provision of the 1904 Public Welfare Commission Law requiring general public welfare institutions dedicate 1/3 of their funds to poor children had achieved little because of the difficulty in distinguishing between institutes of a general nature and those having a specific end. The price tag of the childsaving bill seems to have been too high. Many provincial and *comune* budgets were barely able (or simply unable) to provide the sorts of assistance already required of them (e.g., that for foundlings). Nor it seems was the federal budget sufficiently florid for even Giolitti to re-propose a law that might cost the state 60 percent of a more than 10 million lire annual expense. As a result the bill died a quiet death with the XXII legislature (that ran from November 1904 to January 1909).⁴⁴

In some sense that failure signaled the end, or in any case the beginning of the end, of the season of Italian child anxiety initiated in 1897 with the Annunziata scandal, Paulucci di Calboli's articles about Italian boys working in French glass factories, and Beltrani-Scalia's cry of alarm about juvenile delinquency. With regard to the latter, that season lasted a bit longer. The Committee on Juvenile Delinquency was only formed in 1909 and its work completed in 1912. But that work, in the form of the Minors Code, suffered the same fate as the childsaving bill of 1907.

None of the problems we have explored had gone away by 1912, though child abandonment was certainly on the decline. The employment of children in dangerous occupations like the French glass factories, or as wandering hawkers, beggars, and musicians may also have been on the wane by that date, though given that Italian emigration was at an all-time high, there is reason to suspect that those phenomena persisted and involved a notable number of children.

Nor can we imagine that the nation-building mission of the Risorgimento and unification had been completed. Large numbers of Italians remained illiterate and had not yet been "turned into Italians." Children were of course central to the nation-building mission, having always been perceived as more malleable, impressionable, and reformable than adults. That observation is fully born out in the specific approaches taken with regard to child criminals and street children reviewed here. One of the keys then to creating a modern, secular, progressive nation was to inculcate the greatest number of children with those national values. Achieving that end

required removing children from the margins—moral and material abandonment, brutal working conditions, the street, antisocial and criminal behavior—and inserting them into a trajectory that included family, *asilo*, school, and ultimately productive work. Insofar as the working-class family was unable to guarantee that trajectory, it was the responsibility of the state to step in and replace it, even if that meant challenging the traditional bounds of parental authority, bounds that found defenders among both Catholics and Liberals alike.

Many, perhaps all, of the programs and reforms explored in these chapters shared these goals. And in that they resembled similar efforts in other national contexts. Interesting to note, in the period considered here it was in those bastions of liberal individualism that were the United States and United Kingdom that these programs made the greatest inroads. One more easily finds organized challenges to the prerogatives of working-class parents in America and England, for example, than one does in Italy. In part that may be yet another sign of Italian “backwardness,” a persistent commitment to the concept of parental, especially paternal, authority. But the limitations of the efforts to bring the forces of the state to bear on the various problems affecting children in Italy was also a function of the particular social and political situation in which Italy found itself at the time. Generally speaking, Giolitti’s reforming impulse came up repeatedly against the reality of fiscal limitations in a country that was still relatively poor by European standards. And the Liberal need to concentrate on the simple maintenance of power in the face of Socialist and Catholic challenges surely also distracted reformers from social programs like child saving. At the same time, and as already suggested, the rising tide of emigration came in the 10 or 20 years prior to World War I to dominate the available public and political space for discourse on social problems, forcing out other issues like those considered here, even while it might incorporate them, as in the 1901 Emigration Law. Finally, the war itself marked a turning point. Over the course of it, some children’s issues reemerged, for example the need to care for the children of fallen soldiers. And after its conclusion, questions relating to children would earn pride of place in the demographic policy championed by the Fascist regime. The war and Fascism altered the terms of the debate, and Italian economic growth over the course of the twentieth century helped reduce the gravity of some of the problems identified here—child labor, child abandonment, street children—allowing Italians more and more space for what I have described as the luxury of caring. All of that subsequent history, however, derives from the birth of new ideas in the Liberal period about the responsibility that Italian society and state bore with regard to its marginalized youth. As good a “discovery of childhood” as any, should we be looking for one.

Epilogue

From *Pinocchio* to *Cuore*, Children inside the Margins

The preceding chapters have traversed the geography, chronology, sources, and nature of child anxiety in turn of the century Italy. By way of conclusion, we can return to that aspect of popular culture with which we began, namely children's books. In some ways, the reflections they offer on contemporary children and marginalization, and on the dichotomy dangerous child/child in danger, may represent a more profound index of society's attitudes and concerns than the more straightforward ones like parliamentary debate, legislative proposals, or muckraking journalism. While the range of Italian works written for children at the time provides numerous insights into contemporary child anxiety, a fuller review of that literature is beyond the scope of the present work, and indeed merits a treatment of its own. Instead, for our purposes we shall return once again to *The Adventures of Pinocchio* and then (predictably) draw some comparisons with the other children's classic of the period, Edmondo De Amicis' *Cuore* (*The Heart of a Boy*), which enjoyed a contemporary success (if not a posterity) as great as Collodi's masterpiece. That success of course distinguishes these works as striking a particular chord among the public for which they were written. Like all great children's literature, they "sensed the aspirations and prejudices, fears and hunger of [their] audience" (Warner 1994, 409), both child and adult. More specifically, they resonated with the sort of contemporary children's issues explored in the present work.

First a word on genre. *Pinocchio* is both a traditional and an innovative tale. By several measures it qualifies as a standard fairy tale. It is an enchanting story pitting the (ambiguous) forces of good and evil against one another. It is full of fantasy including the sort of metamorphoses and talking animals that populate and even define the European fairy-tale tradition, a tradition that Collodi knew well. And, again typically, from the

world of fantasy, full of trials and dangers, Collodi does ultimately return his readers to a reassuring real world when Pinocchio makes his final transformation to a proper boy.¹ On the other hand, *Pinocchio* also differs from traditional fairy tales in significant ways. From its opening lines—"Once upon a time there was . . . a piece of wood"—something out of the ordinary is clearly in store. It has even been described as a fairy tale burlesque, one that ironizes on the genre itself. Its setting and cast also distinguish *Pinocchio* from the fairy-tale tradition. Rather than taking place in some unknown kingdom of magic castles and princesses, *Pinocchio* is set in a recognizably Italian (and Tuscan) setting and among the working classes. Moreover, it does not offer the typical concluding moral but instead a subtle commentary on the Italian legal state, on contemporary moral precepts, and of course on social concerns about children.²

Pinocchio is evidently the story of a voyage—one composed at a time when Italian emigration was emerging as the major social issue of its day. It has, in fact, even been described as an epic that ranks along with other voyage epics like *The Odyssey*, *The Aeneid*, and *Don Quixote* (Morrissey and Wunderlich 1983; Toesca 1997). Like these other great epics, it also involves personal journeys: the journey from puppet to "proper boy"; the physical journey on land, air, and sea that eventually reunites Pinocchio with his father Geppetto; and a journey from poverty to middle-class comfort (and respectability). Furthermore, as an epic specific to the newly formed Liberal Italian state, it was a journey of discovery for a state in search of its own identity (and a tale that offered that state an important lesson about freedom) (Toesca 1997, 486).

With regard to the issues raised in the present work, a good starting point is Pinocchio's social status and family. From the outset we learn that his father, Geppetto the wood worker, is a poor man who lives in a one-room hovel without a fire (III),³ and when it comes time to buy Pinocchio a school book he does not have so much as a cent in his pockets (VIII). The fact that poor families had to make considerable sacrifices—Geppetto sells his only jacket in the middle of winter—in order to send their children to school (as required from 1877) may not have been lost on Collodi's contemporaries. So Pinocchio is a product, in more ways than one, of the working class and so derives from that same population as the children of our narrative. The few workers we meet in his town—Maestro Ciliegia, Geppetto—are involved in traditional pursuits so we might imagine that Pinocchio, had he been a bit more industrious, would have apprenticed to a carpenter or perhaps worked in some other aspect of the building trade.

Although Pinocchio's age is never mentioned—appropriate given that as a puppet he can never grow up—he is "born" already school-age, probably somewhere between 8 and 12 like the other boys with whom he is

transported to the Paese dei balocchi (Funland) (XXXI). As such he really never had the opportunity to participate in the first population we considered, namely foundlings. He is, however, a motherless child—born in fact only of a father⁴—and so satisfies one of the contemporary definitions of orphan we explored.

In some ways, *Pinocchio* is also the story of the puppet/boy's search for that missing mother as he becomes a proper boy. The mother figure enters the story in the person of the blue-haired Fairy, though she only becomes a mother after having passed through several other transformations. She first appears to Pinocchio as a beautiful little girl who, alas, announces that she is dead and so cannot help him escape from the murderers who will hang him (XV). Soon after, though, she reappears, now as the Fairy but still a young girl, and succeeds with the help of some enchanted animals in getting Pinocchio down from his gallows and resuscitating him (XVI).⁵ In this intermediate persona, she proposes to be Pinocchio's sister while curing him of his enormous nose, that grows after he lies to her about his gold coins. Though often dismissed as a misreading, it is hard to overlook the phallic (and incestuous) implications of Pinocchio's nose that grows—he nearly pokes the blue-haired Fairy in the eye—and then shrinks under the influence of his beautiful sister. If there is any expression in the book—intentional or not—of contemporary Italian anxiety about adolescent sex, this is surely it (XVII–XVIII).⁶ The nose in fact only grows in response to lying on one other occasion, when Pinocchio praises his own virtues (XXIX). Its first “impertinent” elongation occurs instead as Geppetto is carving the puppet (III), the earliest example of Pinocchio's disobedience.⁷

The blue-haired Fairy serves as both a guide (Virgil-like) and a goal (as mother of an intact bourgeois family) for Pinocchio. After dying (again), broken-hearted at the loss of her baby brother Pinocchio (who has been tricked a second time by Cat and Fox), the blue-haired Fairy reappears on the Island of the Busy Bees as a full-grown woman (XXIV–XXV). As it turns out, she and Pinocchio live together as mother and son for what seems to be the better part of a school year (XXVI–XXX). Ultimately it is thanks to Pinocchio's finally becoming industrious and working hard to support both his ailing father (Geppetto) and hospitalized mother (blue-haired Fairy) that he is transformed from puppet into boy (XXXVI).

In addition to the larger and often metaphorical themes of voyage—Pinocchio as *homo viator*, Pinocchio carved out of the wood of our own humanity and so on the timeless voyage of life itself⁸—the comparisons to real emigration in *Pinocchio* abound. Pinocchio himself is almost always on the move and usually alone or in poor company. We have already mentioned Geppetto's original plan to employ Pinocchio in the wandering trades. Subsequently our hero strays off to Mangiafoco's travelling puppet

show (though he never actually performs), is twice duped by Cat and Fox into joining them on a trip to the Field of Miracles, and tries unsuccessfully to travel home to his fairy sister. The most explicit reference to contemporary emigration, however, is Pinocchio's 1000 kilometer flight to get to the "shore" from which Geppetto has departed for none other than the New World—destination of so many Italian emigrants at the time—imagining that Pinocchio has already set off in that direction. (Depending upon the location of the "forest" from which he sets out it would be difficult given that distance for the coast to be an Italian one but Collodi intentionally cultivates this sort of absurdity.) Unlike most of his compatriots, however, Geppetto embarks not on a steam ship but in a small boat that will eventually capsize (allowing him to be swallowed by the monstrous shark). Pinocchio attempts to follow by swimming. As it turns out, he only gets as far as the Island of the Busy Bees; given the link between New World emigration and labor, we can note a parallel here as well (XXIII–XXIV).

Work is in fact, along with school, the activity Pinocchio is most determined to avoid. On the Island of the Busy Bees we learn that in spite of his hunger, Pinocchio turns down offers to haul both charcoal and mortar for pay—the first reminiscent of the sulfur hauling we explored in chapter 3 and the second of the building trades in which, as we have seen, children often worked—as well as 20 other offers of employment (XXIV). On the other hand, Pinocchio is forced to work on several occasions and is generally not well treated, as a watch dog and, after he has become a donkey, as a performer in the circus; this latter the classic and among the most condemned of wandering trades. When Pinocchio finally becomes a willing and diligent worker in the final chapter, he weaves baskets, builds a cart, and daily turns a windlass for a local peasant to draw water from his well. Pinocchio engages cheerfully in all these activities, heartened by his ability to help his poor and ailing father and apparently not suffering from maltreatment or over work. On the other hand, the windlass position is only available because its former occupant, Pinocchio's old friend Lucignolo, had been worked to death at it (never having succeeded as Pinocchio did in reversing his transformation into a donkey). Ultimately Pinocchio is determined to work harder still in order to offer assistance to the blue-haired Fairy whom he learns is sick in the hospital. It is that resolve though that finally turns him into a proper and respectable boy (*ragazzo per bene*) which apparently also means middle class as he is well dressed, has 40 gold coins in his pocket, and lives in a nicely furnished house. Geppetto also transforms, regaining his health and becoming now a prosperous wood carver. At that point in the story, it seems clear that while the boy Pinocchio may return to school, he is unlikely to engage in much more manual labor.

The commentary on criminal justice in *Pinocchio* bears on our own discussion of juvenile delinquency. That commentary is ambiguous. On

the one hand, the figures of bourgeois authority are regularly ridiculed: the gorilla-judge who unjustly imprisons Pinocchio (XIX); the *carabinieri* who seem always to arrest the wrong person whether Geppetto at the outset (III) or Pinocchio later on (XXVII).⁹ On the other hand, Pinocchio's own troubles stem almost entirely from his disobedience and, by contemporary measures, criminal behavior. That disobedience finds expression throughout the tale in both act and symbol, probably most notably in Pinocchio's several body transformations. Leaving aside the phallic association, Pinocchio's nose is more often understood as a sign of youthful rebellion. At his very worst, when he runs off with Lucignolo to the Paese dei balocchi, it is his ears instead that grow as Pinocchio turns into a donkey. Indeed we are reminded at several other points in the text that such is the fate of a child who rejects school and authority, namely to become, if only metaphorically, a jack ass, a beast generally (if perhaps unjustifiably) associated with stupidity.

So while authority is challenged in the story, Pinocchio's own rejection of authority is repeatedly punished. In the context of our own narrative, he would seem to be the ideal candidate for *correzione paterna* (chapter 4) and so confinement to a reformatory. In addition (and as already mentioned), he frequently engages in activities defined at the time as criminal. He begs repeatedly, in his hometown (VI) and on the Island of the Busy Bees (XXIV). He is a lazy vagabond and described as such on several occasions, for example by the talking cricket (XVI). And in the Paese dei balocchi he joins with other boys in forming street gangs that must have evoked scenes familiar to Italian urban dwellers of the day. These boys play games and perform in the street. Contrary to the contemporary stereotypes we have explored, they do not seem to beg or steal; but their needs seem to be taken care of in that care-free land, and there does not seem to be any sort of money economy. Ultimately, economic considerations do reassert themselves, though, as it is that street life that leads them to become donkeys and thus be sold for profit.

Is *Pinocchio* then a moral tale, warning against disobedience and other frowned-upon or antisocial behavior? Pinocchio's final repentance and transformation might argue as much, but the story is far from being so simple. Collodi in fact disowned in some sense the tale's ending, claiming not to have remembered writing it. Whether accurate or a typically Collodian invention, that claim forces us to evaluate the story more carefully. Collodi was a lifelong critic of authority and even has the school boys in *Pinocchio* throw some of his own didactic volumes into the sea (XXVII). And how seriously can we take a passage like the following:

He was ashamed to go begging, because his father had always taught him that only the old and the infirm had a right to ask for charity. The truly poor in this world, those worthy of help and compassion, are only those who by

reason of age or infirmity are condemned to being unable to earn their bread with their own hands. Everyone else has the duty of working; and if they don't work and go hungry so much the worse for them. (Collodi/Perella 1986, 275)

Aside from the fact that it is hard to imagine how many life lessons Pinocchio could have learned from Geppetto by this time, given that they seem to have lived together for a total of at most a few days (perhaps a single night), this discourse on the evils of begging and the duty of work is immediately followed by Pinocchio's most persistent episode of begging and refusal to work (on the Island of the Busy Bees), surely an episode to balance and challenge the passage quoted here.

As others have pointed out, *Pinocchio* contains an "existential anxiety" and a doubting irreverence. It puts forward an ideal of freedom that must be Collodi's own, and these are all elements that help us to understand the work's appeal. Pinocchio is a subversive or "nonmodel" child who in his repeated flights from responsibility embodies the spirit of freedom itself (Gasperini 1997; Lawson Lucas 1999). If Collodi ultimately comes down on the side of social order and its acceptance, it is only after a delightful ode to disorder. Is *Pinocchio* then really a moral or cautionary tale with a happy and reassuring middle-class ending? Are we left afterwards with nostalgia for the *ragazzo per bene* (proper boy) of the last chapter or for the *burattino* (puppet) of the rest of the work who better resembles, with all his exaggerated shortcomings, a *ragazzo vero* or real working-class boy? Evocative then of the series of contemporary child anxieties we have explored, *Pinocchio* also argues for another and more nuanced perspective than the principal one we find in legislation, parliamentary debate, and expert opinion. For we are left feeling that boys will inevitably be boys and it is probably a good thing that they are.¹⁰



Along with *Pinocchio*, the other classic of Italian children's literature is Edmondo De Amicis' *Cuore*, published in 1886, just three years after Collodi's novel. The works could not be more different. While *Pinocchio* appeals on multiple levels, *Cuore* is truly a didactic "book for children" as its subtitle suggests, and is anything but a fairy tale. It is set in the real world—De Amicis' own Turin—and involves no talking animals or marvelous transformations. While the protagonist of *Pinocchio* is an impatient rebel and nonmodel child, the hero of *Cuore*, Enrico, is something of an ideal and obedient boy. Nor does *Cuore* really express any doubts about the legitimacy of authority. Enrico does at times have to struggle against his

own nature, but his goal—and so the goal set for his child reader—is clear: obedience and respect shown to parents and teachers and a perfect adherence to the moral and patriotic code set out in the book.

Not surprisingly, many adults today, and children too for that matter, find *Cuore*'s moralizing tone heavy-handed. For our purposes, the work is interesting because its primary topic is precisely the children about whom the present work speaks almost not at all, namely children in school. *Cuore*, as any Italian reader will know, is the diary of a year in third grade.¹¹ Seeking to unite the new Italy, it introduces us to a cast of pupils who span the whole social gamut, from children of the poorest vegetable sellers to those of the Piedmont aristocracy, as well as the geographic one, from its northwestern setting to southernmost Calabria.

Much has been written about *Cuore*, and this is not the place to enter into debates about, for example, the degree to which it embodies an "exaggerated and almost servile consensus in relation to the interests and point of view of the ruling class" or else reveals early signs of De Amicis' subsequent conversion to socialism.¹² A point on which almost all analysts do agree though is that *Cuore* was meant to inspire its readers with a love of Italy. De Amicis fully embraced the lay Risorgimento program according to which the Italian political unification of 1859–1870 should lead to the moral and spiritual unification of all those people who had become Italians, and so cross boundaries of class, geography, and language. In the words of Asor Rosa, it was "one of the most powerful tools of national cultural unification" (Cambi 1996, 317). *Cuore* indeed provides us with a utopian view of Italy as socially unified and harmonious, each child (except Franti) accepting his—the story is exclusively about boys—eventual place in Italian society. And that unification and harmony was to be achieved by the public school.

De Amicis did not of course discover the school as a tool of social engineering. In the context of industrialization, urbanization, and (in some contexts) expanding suffrage, the nineteenth century saw the spread of compulsory elementary-school education across Europe.¹³ The later stages of European industrialization required more skilled (and so literate) workers. Universal schooling sought to insure the formation of an obedient labor force (while at the same time inevitably giving that force new tools of protest). In Italy, elementary school—the same school Pinocchio repeatedly fails to attend—had been compulsory for less than a decade when De Amicis wrote *Cuore*. As that book makes clear, Italian schools were to teach not only literacy and obedience but also a patriotic attachment to united Italy, an attachment that, judging from parts of *Cuore*, might require even children to lay down their lives for the *patria*. De Amicis' school was "the living symbol of national unity, not only the teacher of duty but the molder of collective consciousness" (Cambi 1996, 320).

As various commentators have observed, De Amicis intentionally leaves out of his story the “subrealities” of childhood at the time: delinquency, crime, prostitution, infanticide to list a few.¹⁴ *Cuore* tells the story then of a group of children living within the margins of liberal bourgeois respectability, including importantly the working-class children attending school. Absent for the most part are instead those marginalized children discussed in the preceding chapters. In Enrico’s class we do not meet, for example, foundlings, itinerant entertainers, overseas emigrants (one boy’s emigrant father as it turns out is not in America but instead serving a six-year prison term), glass or textile workers, or street children. The one notable exception is the detested Franti, a juvenile delinquent who provides a moral lesson (of how not to behave) and whose criminal behavior leads to his expulsion from school in March and confinement to the Turinese reformatory La Generala (see chapter 4). Nonetheless, while *Cuore* is largely a story of the classroom, it does find ways from time to time to get outside it.

One of the more interesting devices used in *Cuore* are the monthly stories. These tales, provided by the teacher, are copied out and read by the students. Each one tells a heroic tale of a school-age boy, each from a different one of Italy’s regions. The first one (October), for example, is about an eleven-year-old boy from Padua who has been sold by his parents to the head of a troupe of traveling acrobats. After two years of mistreatment and performance, wandering through France and Spain, he has escaped. Thanks to the Italian consul there, he is returning home on a ship from Barcelona. More likely he would have come from Viggiano or some other village in the southern Apennines, but the activity was just that targeted by the 1873 law on wandering trades discussed in chapter 2. We do not encounter much more in the way of child labor in *Cuore*, though there is a boy chimney sweep in October and a scene of young workers trudging home in February.

The second month’s tale takes place during the wars for unification. Its hero, shot while high in a tree providing a lookout after the battle of Solferino in 1859, is notably a Lombard foundling, though we learn little else about his past. Was he, for example, a fortunate survivor of the Milanese foundling home? In March, the monthly story concerns instead a vagabond and delinquent youth who comes home late after an evening of fighting and gambling. When thieves enter the house he achieves salvation (and death) by putting his body in the way of the knife intended for his grandmother. Heroic sacrifice, it seems, can redeem even the most dissolute of youth. The final two stories both deal with emigration, a topic to which De Amicis would return in subsequent years. The first of these (May) is a long tale of a boy from Genova who undergoes unbelievable

hardships (including hunger, seemingly endless treks, back-breaking labor, and mistreatment) as he travels to Argentina and finally up into the Andes to find his mother. He arrives just in time to convince her to have a lifesaving operation. And the final story (June) recounts the unhappy adventure of a Sicilian boy and Neapolitan girl, both parentless, both being returned to Italy from Liverpool by—again—the Italian consulate. Having become fast friends on the voyage, the (younger and smaller) boy gives his place (the last) on the life boat to the girl as the wrecked ship sinks beneath the waves. Neither story can have been very typical of Italian emigration, but both address that phenomenon which by the mid-1880s had been identified as one of Italy's leading social problems. Italy's first Emigration Law came in 1888, two years after the publication of *Cuore*.

Evidently the liberal bourgeois program that informed Italy's child policies and programs, not only with regard to compulsory schooling but also child labor, juvenile delinquency, wandering trades, and so on, sought to move children out of the marginal areas explored in the present work (many of which Pinocchio occupied at one time or another) and into the margins of De Amicis' utopian school. One might ask in closing then: how did the world of *Cuore* and the world inhabited by the less fortunate youth of my narrative compare? Were there more children inside or outside the margins?

At the time of unification, illiteracy was still widespread (and many Italians did not speak the national language at all). According to the Italian census illiteracy stood at 69 percent in 1871 for the population over the age of 6, declining to 49 percent 30 years later, more or less coinciding with the publication of *Cuore*. Predictably regional rates still varied considerably at the later date: from 75 percent in Basilicata to a low 18 percent in De Amicis' Piedmont. Compulsory schooling was of course intended to address this problem and in fact by 1901 illiteracy among 12–15 year olds was measured nationally at 38 percent.

As far as school attendance was concerned, investigations undertaken immediately after unification revealed an elementary school student body of 1.3 million in 1863–1864 (56 percent boys). For 6–12 year olds, 47 percent of boys and 39 percent of girls went to school at that date. Given the difficulties of staffing rural schools and the seasonal (generally harvest) interruptions that the still predominantly agricultural population required of its children, school attendance did not of course guarantee literacy. Nonetheless, at the turn of the century (1901), Italian statisticians reported over 2.7 million students in elementary school or about 65 percent of all 6–12 year olds. It is interesting to note that the percentage of the age group not in school at that time corresponds almost precisely with illiteracy among 12–15 year olds;¹⁵ elementary schooling may, perhaps by definition, have equipped students to qualify as literate.

What these statistics suggest is that at the time of unification the category of marginalized youth explored here was really not marginal at all. Indeed only a minority of Italian children went to school and learned to read and write at that time. Forty years later instead, progress had been made, and while Italian levels of literacy and instruction still lagged well behind levels achieved in a number of other European states, at the later date most Italian kids went to school (with persistent regional variations). Non-scholastic youth had by then become marginal. As Liberal state and society came to focus on perceived categories of deviance in what I have called the age of Pinocchio, the various groups of children who never saw the inside of a school room fell into the minority and so could be identified in the collective consciousness as a shrinking and backward class. Truly criminal behavior may have always been seen as deviant but the period in question witnessed as we have seen the criminalization (and institutionalization) of much more ambiguous behaviors (idleness, vagrancy, disobedience). Child labor was regulated (and so discouraged). And those responsible for providing succor to Italy's unfortunate foundlings and orphans were specifically enjoined to provide elementary school instruction (as opposed for example, to simply provide religious instruction).

By the turn of the century, and certainly by the outbreak of the Great War, the categories of marginalization were well identified. The age of Pinocchio rested on the real experience of children in Liberal Italy—as foundlings, orphans, workers, emigrants, petty criminals, and street children—but it was at the same time a construction of liberal bourgeois perception. Underlying that perception was the general conviction that, thanks to unification and the forces of modernization, the Age of Pinocchio would lead instead to the Age of *Cuore*.

Notes

Introduction

1. For a good introduction to *Pinocchio*, see the “Essay on Pinocchio” in Collodi/Perella 1986; that volume also includes the Castellani Pollidori edition of the original text and a facing page translation by Perella. For another good translation, see Collodi/Lawson Lucas 1996 and also her essay in Lawson Lucas 1999. For recent Italian criticism see Pezzini and Fabbri 2002 and the other pieces in that volume. The *Pinocchio* literature is explored further in the epilogue.
2. On Galton and eugenics, see Kevles 1985; for Lombroso see Gibson 2002; Pick 1989, 109–52; Villa 1985.
3. It is interesting to note how many works on childsaving and related issues focus on the period starting in 1870 or 1880; see, for example and in addition to the works cited here, Behlmer 1982; Davin 1996; Hendrick 1997; Murdoch 2000.
4. Modern economic growth is Kuznets’ term. All sources agree that Italy enjoyed impressive industrial growth after 1896, but estimates of how impressive vary considerably: from 5 to 8 % per annum, for example, for the period 1896–1908; see Toniolo 1990, 1–11, 98–123.
5. On foundlings, see Kertzer 1993, especially 174–8 and works cited there. On child labor, see Nardinelli 1990.
6. See Gentile 1997, especially 23–7, 91–103. On the modernization debate in relation to Italian historiography, including challenges to the traditional view of economic immobilism, see Davis 1994; for a more general discussion of modernization and history see Wehler 1991. Modernization often figures in discussions of Italian backwardness; indeed modernization might simply be described as the attempt to overcome backwardness (though such a description admittedly simply shifts the burden of definition to another term). For discussions of Italian backwardness, political and economic, in the period between unification and World War I, see Bosworth 1979, 1–9; Gerschenkron 1962, 72–89; and for more general and sociocultural discussions, Gentile 1997, 37–46, 91–103; Tullio-Altan 1986, especially 11–96; On the Liberal urge to modernize, see Romanelli 1988, esp. 18–24 as well as Lanaro’s interesting study of bourgeois opinion (1979) where these sentiments emerge from time to time together with references to populationist thought. *Meridionalisti* were reformers especially concerned about the southern problem; *Italietta* translates more

or less as little Italy (in the sense of a small or insignificant power rather than an Italian settlement or neighborhood outside of Italy).

7. s.a., "Cenni sulle moderne istituzioni per la tutela igienica della prima infanzia in Italia," *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1911): 418.
8. See, for example, Heywood 2001, 19–31.
9. For a brief discussion of child emigration statistics, see Di Bello and Nuti 2001, 9–11.

1 Abandoned Children

1. A portion of the material presented in this chapter has already appeared in Ipsen 1999; see also Ipsen 2000. On the Annunziata, see also D'Addosio 1883; Da Molin 1981; Da Molin 1994; Giordano 1999; Gorni 1974, 95–107; Guidi 1991; Iannitto 1999; Tapaninen 2004; Valenzi 1995, 16–18; White Mario 1897 and other sources cited below.
2. *La Libertà* May 22, 1897: 3.
3. Neapolitan papers consulted for the Annunziata scandal include *Corriere di Napoli*, *Don Marzio*, *La Libertà*, *Il Mattino*, *Il Paese*, and *Roma*, all consulted at the Biblioteca nazionale centrale di Roma «Vittorio Emanuele II». Subsequently reference would be made to the international attention the scandal received, but a look through *The Times* of London, *The Manchester Guardian*, and *The New York Times* for May 24–June 30, 1897 turned up no references, though several other Italian stories were covered.
4. A generalization of this sort of course overlooks significant regional differences, both demographic and economic. Nonetheless, the national crude birth rate did begin to fall in the 1890s and Livi Bacci does identify the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s (but not the 1890s) as characterized by a "predecline pattern of fertility." For his much more nuanced analysis of Italian fertility decline see (1977), esp. 49–109. All sources agree that Italy enjoyed impressive industrial growth after 1896; see Toniolo 1990, 1–11, 98–123.
5. Foundling homes and other *opere pie* were generally under the control of provincial administrations (in some cases Catholic administrations). Attempts were made to specifically exclude clerical involvement in the *opere pie* and to eliminate the expenses of religious ceremonies celebrated there, though these attempts were generally unsuccessful. The existence of preunification endowments might also complicate the situation. See Cherubini 1991, esp. 7–20, 31–7, 76–94.
6. Since unification, Italy has been organized politically into regions, provinces, and *comuni* or municipalities. The head of the province is the prefect, appointed by the minister of the interior. The head of the *comune* is the *sindaco* or mayor, at this time chosen by a Municipal Council (Consiglio comunale), in turn elected by "popular" (still very limited) suffrage. In the current story, the main administrative actor is the province of Naples, ruling authority of the Annunziata.
7. Cavasola was appointed prefect in 1896 by Antonio di Rudini; he later became a senator; see Scirocco 1974.

8. See, e.g., May 2, 1897.
9. May 21, 1897.
10. May 23, 1897; May 24, 1897.
11. The *deliberazione* from the GPA investigation is reprinted in *Corriere di Napoli*, May 23, 1897. In addition to that document and the Pucci investigation cited below, information on the Annunziata scandal is derived from documents collected as part of the Reale inchiesta di Napoli conducted by Giuseppe Saredo under the aegis of the Interior Ministry beginning in 1900 (ACS INT Inch. NA, bb. 94–5).
12. On the conservative or moderate liberal *Il Mattino*, see *Storia di Napoli*, v. 10, 61; De Nunzio Schilardi 1986, 102.
13. May 23–24, 1897.
14. May 25–26, 1897.
15. Brancaccio in Galasso 1987, 152; Ghirelli 1977, 22–3; Musella 1990, 753–6. *Il Paese*, May 2, 1897 describes *Roma* as “il giornale dell’on. Lazzaro.” The Lazzaro letter was printed in *Roma*, May 24, 1897 and *Don Marzio*, May 24–25, 1897.
16. May 25, 1897; May 26, 1897. Parlati was elected to the Neapolitan Consiglio provinciale in 1889; and reelected in December 1891.
17. On the imperfect laicization of charitable works in Liberal Italy, see Cherubini 1991; Quine 2002, 36–95.
18. Valenzi describes the position of charitable works administrator in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Naples as the nexus of a system of clientelism and an obligatory step in a political career (1995, 8). See also Iannitto 1999, 78.
19. On local Neapolitan politics in the period, see Ghirelli 1977; Musella 1990; Scirocco 1972; Rubinacci is identified as a possible spy against the Neapolitan Chamber of Labor in Ghirelli 1994. White Mario gives Lazzaro’s starting date at the Annunziata (1978, 139, n. 5).
20. On the meeting and the Radical Geremicca’s intervention, see *Corriere di Napoli*, May 29, 1897; *Il Paese*, May 29, 1897; *Il Mattino*, May 29–30, 1897.
21. For Bovio’s *interpellanza* and responses, see Atti C. disc. May 24, 1897, 972–88.
22. On the resignation and the appointment and arrival of Pucci, see the Neapolitan press (n. 3 above) May 30–June 5, 1897.
23. On syphilis and abandonment, see Kertzer 1999.
24. Guidi describes these women as “operators” referring to Werner et al. 1973.
25. *Corriere di Napoli*, June 26, 1897.
26. See Pucci 1900, part II as well as *Il Mattino* June 29–30, 1897; *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1897): 954–9; Titomanlio 1899, 10–12.
27. On the Pucci and Cellamare administrations see ACS INT Inch. NA, b. 94.
28. See Da Molin 1981 and 1994; Gorni 1974; Guarnieri 2004; Hunecke 1989; Kertzer 1993; Kertzer and White 1994; Quine 2002; Viazzo et al. 1994. Hunecke refers to a century of foundlings, roughly from the mid-eighteenth to the late-nineteenth century (15–22), but concedes that his cut-off date of 1900 is fairly arbitrary (38). Gorni specifically discusses the period 1861–1901, and her work represents a good discussion of foundling care after unification, but her ending date is mysterious. She also specifically discusses the Annunziata (95–107) and ends her work with a mention of the 1897 scandal. Kertzer

- focuses on the period between the Council of Trent and about 1870, though in the penultimate chapter does refer to some of the later debates discussed here. Viazzo et al. exceptionally do carry their discussion up to the 1930s. Quine represents a recent exception, focusing on both the Liberal and Fascist periods, though in an uneven work. Guarnieri instead looks specifically at the Florentine foundling home in our period, and so under the directorship of Gustavo Pucci.
29. Hunecke finds that abandonment peaked in Milan in the 1860s (1989, 287), and Kertzer traces steady increase for a number of places up to 1850 (1993, 73–5); while Gorni, using statistics published at the time, finds a 26% decline for Italy as a whole between 1884 and 1900 (1974, 44). As mentioned below, the parliamentary study found a decline of 16.5% during the period 1879–96 (Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 16–19). For more on post-1860 levels of abandonment, see Ipsen 2000. At the time when the Annunziata finally closed in 1980, it received about 5 foundlings per year.
 30. On fertility decline in Italy, see Livi Bacci 1977. On the spread of birth control in Italy, see Bonarini 1994.
 31. For a brief discussion of these issues, see Kertzer 1993, 174–8.
 32. For foundling care in France, see Fuchs 1984; Rollet-Echalier 1990 (62–71 for the 1860 investigation).
 33. As Kertzer points out, southern practices differed from those in the Center and North by virtue of greater use of direct consignment to external wet nurses without the intermediate step of the foundling home (1993, 89–90), but until 1866, anonymous abandonment and use of the turning cradles was virtually universal.
 34. On the debate and legislative status of charitable works in the period, see Cherubini 1991.
 35. On origins and for a more detailed description of the preunification Italian foundling care, see Kertzer 1993.
 36. According to the Italian civil code of 1865, the birth certificate of an illegitimate child could only list the parents names if they consented to be so listed (art. 376). If no parent was listed then the child was officially a *figlio d'ignoti* (whether or not anyone knew who the parents were) and responsibility for his or her care rested with the province and *comune* (art. 276 of the legge provinciale e comunale April 20, 1865). If, instead, one or other of the parents recognized the child and consented to be named on the birth certificate, then the child was considered natural and that parent assumed responsibility for the child's care and education (civil code arts. 179–87). Recognition of a natural child could take place at any time and by either parent (art. 181), though care was taken to insure that fathers not be named without their knowledge or against their will (art. 179). If one of the illegitimate parents was married, then recognition was not allowed (art. 180). There were also provisions for legitimization, by subsequent marriage, of natural children.
 37. Infant mortality rates (deaths age 0–1 per total live births) in certain rural parts of Europe were still as high as 30% in the twentieth century, and there are no indications that they were much lower in earlier ones. Normally the majority of infant mortality is concentrated in the first days and weeks of life, so one

can imagine that the population of potentially lactating women without infant children must indeed have been large.

38. For contemporary discussions of abandonment and paternity/maternity searches in other national contexts, see Titomanlio 1899; White Mario 1897, 16–17. See also Gorni 1974, 65–6. On the status of illegitimate children and the restrictions regarding maternity and paternity searches in Italy, see Ungari 1974, 169–71.
39. On the Annunziata, see D'Addosio 1883; Da Molin 1981; Da Molin 1994; Giordano 1999; Gorni 1974, 95–107; Guidi 1991; Iannitto 1999; Ipsen 2000; Tapaninen 2004; Valenzi 1995, 16–18; White Mario 1897.
40. Ranieri 1886. Ranieri, a Neapolitan, was briefly imprisoned for his efforts and then exiled. A second edition was published in 1862 following unification. Ranieri served in both houses of the Italian parliament. Laura Guidi, the leading expert on charitable institutions for women in nineteenth-century Naples, bases many of her comments regarding the Annunziata on Ranieri's novel and believes it to be a valid source of information on the home (Guidi 1991, 36, 91n., 91–2, 98–9, 101–2, 118). Ginevra's trials, in addition to incredible physical and psychological hardship, include being raped by a priest and twice nearly drowned, the second time after having been kicked into the Tiber by her common-law husband (by whom she is pregnant at the time).
41. Guidi 1991, 147 (my translation); see this work for a detailed discussion of Neapolitan female institutions, especially 145–53 on *oblatismo* and its critics. See also Iannitto 1999, 76–80.
42. Ginevra saves herself from the job of wet nursing by the feminine art of halting lactation (*mandare il latte indietro*) (Ranieri 1886, 267).
43. On circumstances surrounding the publication of Ranieri's novel, see Riccardo Reim's introduction as well as Ranieri's own preface to the third edition in Ranieri 1886, 9–22.
44. Authority figures identified by Ranieri include a rector (*padre rettore*), a magistrate (*presidente della magistratura*) and, the ultimate authority, a duke.
45. L. comm. e prov. March 20, 1865, n. 2248 (all. A); see Gorni 1974. See also White Mario 1978, 81–2, n. 9.
46. The *ruota* was taken out and the opening walled up (with a plaque listing the date); the *ruota* and receiving room have recently been restored and made into a small museum.
47. For an annual series of Annunziata abandonments, see Ipsen 2000.
48. Lazzaro et al. 1897; the number of children taken in without compensation declined from 694 (73%) in 1875 to about 200 (12–14%) for 1897–1901, leaving out the anomalous 1900 (63 or 4%) (Cellamare memorandum in ACS INT inch. NA, b. 94 (corrispondenze)).
49. D'Addosio 1883, 174–6 refers to the closing of the *convento*, but not the *alunnato*. For more on the *alunnato*, see text below or Pucci 1900.
50. On the 1875 reform, see Pucci 1900, 6–8.
51. White Mario 1978; see Gianni Infusino's preface for bibliographical and historical information (vii–xxxvi) as well as his annotation to the text. On White Mario, see also Daniels 1972.

52. Even the medical visit, however, was no guarantee as hereditary syphilis, for example, might not show itself for some weeks. As a result, some homes advocated exclusively “artificial” feeding of foundlings for the duration of this incubation period, with predictably disastrous results.
53. Art. 276 of the legge provinciale e comunale April 20, 1865.
54. This 1878 study, by G. Tocci, is, for example, cited by both Raseri (1884, 219, 244) and Gorni (1974, 54–5). Apparently Cosenza did a poor job of placing infants with external nurses, but for those who were so fortunate, external mortality was reported as a low 267 per 1000.
55. Raseri 1884, 246, also cited by Kertzer (1993, 143) and Gorni (1974, 23).
56. See Ipsen 2000.
57. Restated as Legge comunale e provinciale, R.d. May 4, 1898, art. 299.
58. On the deliberations leading up to the investigation, see Atti C. disc. June 16, 1897, 1948–9; June 23, 1897, 2305–6; the Commission was formed by R.d. July 1, 1897; see also R.d. April 3, 1898; R.d. November 24, 1898. The Commission’s publications included Commissione brefotrofi 1900a and Commissione brefotrofi 1900b; the author of the Commissione brefotrofi 1900b was Raffaele Perla, another member of the Commission.
59. Luigi Pelloux’s two-year administration replaced that of di Rudinì in June 1898; like di Rudinì, Pelloux kept the interior portfolio for himself.
60. Atti C. disc. December 12, 1898, 808–11; Simeoni 1900.
61. On foundling mortality measures at the time, see again Ipsen 2000.
62. The lowest foundling home rates were for Portoferraio (23.3), Novi Ligure (20.4), Arcidosso (22.6), Livorno (23.3), Mondovì (24.1), Vercelli (24.3); the highest rates were for Viterbo (50.3), San Gimignano (51.1), Orvieto (52), Como (52.3), Mantua (54.5), Avellino (55.5), Catanzaro (59.8), Messina (62.5), and Padua (67.3). See Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 16–31, 64–72; see also Commissione brefotrofi 1900b, 5–7 on Naples.
63. The low southern rates were very likely the result of under-reporting, and in any case these figures fluctuated considerably. Provincial rates (homes only) for 1898, for example, were highest (rather than lowest) for Abruzzo and lowest (rather than highest) for Venetia (Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 22).
64. Mitchell reports the following rates for 1900: France (16), United Kingdom (15), Sweden (10) (Mitchell 1980, 140–1).
65. Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 7–11, 61–3; Raseri 1884, 224–7. Corsini also shows that in 1840–42, more than 30 years before the *ruota* was closed, anonymous abandonment in Florence already accounted for only 40% of the total (1997, 14–15).
66. For a discussion of the figures on which these observations and figure 1.1 are based, see Ipsen 2000.
67. The population of Italy at the time was about 32 million; the decline in abandonment occurred in a context of population growth—about 14% between 1881 and 1901—but fairly constant annual births (about 1.1 million) (Mitchell 1980, 31, 96).
68. Kertzer presents similar results for 1863 (1993, 75–7), as does Gorni for the 1870s and 1890s (1874, 46–8). The illegitimacy rate instead ranged from 27 per

thousand births in Lombardy to 222 in Latium. The latter figures are complicated by the fact that religious weddings were not recognized by the state so that the children born to parents who chose not to go through a civil ceremony (often in protest against the secular Liberal state) were considered illegitimate; hence the enormous rate in the former Papal State. Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 16–19.

69. The better homes included Turin, Milan, Bologna, Florence, Rome, and Palermo. Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 34–5.
70. Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 29–41; out of 78 homes listed, 49 had periods of external support between 7 and 12 years (Commissione brefotrofi 1900b, 89).
71. See Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 7–11, 61–3 which lists 1179 *comuni* (of a total of about 8000) as having *ruote* in 1866 as compared to 306 in 1897 (of which ten were in Tuscany and the Marches). Nearly a decade later, Giolitti in the Senate referred, without citing his source, to 464 *ruote*, all in the South except for 3 in Lombardy, 13 in Emilia, and 18 in the Marches (Atti S. disc. December 11, 1907, 7728–30). In spite of a small movement in favor of reopening the turning cradles, it seems unlikely that the number actually increased as suggested by these figures. Both Gorni (1974, 13, based on an 1877 study) and Kertzer (1993, 3) refer to 1200 *ruote* for 1867.
72. According to the civil code, maternity searches were permitted, but technically only when carried out by the illegitimate child (art. 190), while paternity searches were prohibited except in the cases of kidnapping and violent rape (*casi di ratto o di stupro violento*, art. 189); see also Kertzer 1993, 68–70 and n. 39 above.
73. Payments initially lasted for three years but then were shortened to 18 months.
74. Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 10–12. See also Minelli 1898 and Gorni 1974, 16–17, 56.
75. See, for example, Tozzi in Atti C. disc., December 12, 1898, 809–10; White Mario 1897, 65–74. For criticism of the reform, see De Kunert 1899, Donati 1899b.
76. Though specifically *not* to register the investigated woman as the child's mother on the birth certificate *against her will*, which would have been a blatant violation of article 376 of the civil code.
77. See nn. 38 and 72 on maternity searches; Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 11–15. On the Milan home, see Hunecke 1989. On the Milan reform, see Grassi 1898; Grassi was the home's much-praised director at the time. Bona Mustilli (Giordano 1999, 100–1) refers to a 1900 accord reached by foundling homes in northern Italy and establishing standard practices relative to admission and maternity searches. I have not come across this accord; nor does she provide a reference.
78. See Commissione brefotrofi 1900b, 53 for just such a description of the physician's role.
79. On the difference between illegitimate and foundling mortality, see Ipsen 2000.
80. Most of the advocates of foundling home reform did not go so far as to advocate paternity searches. For exceptions, including a couple of attempts to introduce legislation, see White Mario 1897, 16–17, 76–82; *Rivista di*

- Beneficenza Pubblica* (1898): 429–30. During discussion of Giolitti's founding home law (see below), Vittorio Orlando, then minister of justice, went so far as to promise to present a *disegno di legge* on paternity searches (Atti S. disc. December 9, 1907, 7677–81).
81. See Wanrooij 1990, 22, and generally 19–59; on the related change in public opinion regarding the rights of illegitimate children in this same period, see Ungari 1974, 199–200.
 82. See Minelli 1898; Grassi 1898; Castiglioni 1902; Wanrooij 1990, 31–3.
 83. See Amendola 1906; *Rivista Di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1898): 426–8; (1899): 694–7.
 84. Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 13; Wanrooij refers to similar observations of Sicilian practices made as part of the Inchiesta Jacini in the 1880s (1990, 28); and Kertzer lists yet another 1877 source (1993, 147).
 85. The Commission's *disegno di legge* was published as an appendix to Commissione brefotrofi 1900b (101–9); arguments favoring the closing of the turning cradles are included in Commissione brefotrofi 1900b (18–23) and Commissione brefotrofi 1900a (51); see also Commissione brefotrofi 1900b, 18–23, 45–66, 77–95; Commissione brefotrofi 1900a, 51–8.
 86. Attention paid to the issue by the daily press was of course largely limited to the immediate aftermath of the Annunziata scandal. On the other hand, that scandal initiated a period of several years during which the *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* regularly hosted articles by the major protagonists of the reform movement. But even in that journal the space devoted to founding issues declined markedly beginning in 1905.
 87. Atti S. D.l. N. 80 (May 1, 1900).
 88. See *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1902): 609–37.
 89. Atti S. D.l. N. 537 (May 4, 1907).
 90. Atti S. disc. December 9–10–11, 1907, 7657–81, 7690–713, 7718–30.
 91. See note 71 above.
 92. Atti C. D.l. N. 921 (December 19, 1907).
 93. Atti C. D.l. N. 921-A (December 11, 1908).
 94. *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1908): 708–30.
 95. Atti C. D.l. N. 98 (May 4, 1909).
 96. Atti C. disc. May 9, 1914, pp. 2468–71; May 13, 1914, 2638–44, 2661.
 97. R.d. February 11, 1923, n. 336, subsequently replaced by R.d. December 16, 1923, n. 2900.
 98. For a contemporary statement of the *questione meridionale*, see Nitti 1903; for a more up-to-date one, see Donzelli 1990. For the history of the *risanamento* in Naples, see also Snowden 1996, 181–220.
 99. The second and lesser-known part of the Saredo investigation (of the provincial administration) included charitable works as a primary object. Saredo's death in December 1902 interrupted it, and nothing on charitable works was published; but the material gathered remains in the state archive, and that regarding the Annunziata constitutes a primary source for the present chapter. On the Saredo investigation, see Russo 1972. On the generally deplorable conditions in Neapolitan charitable works, see Valenzi 1995, 63–79.

100. The historical literature also devotes considerably more space to foundlings than to orphans. For a few exceptions, see Carbone 2000; Sonnino 1992; Trisciuzzi and De Rosa 1986.
101. See, again, ISTAT 1950, 11; for regional rates see DIRSTAT 1907, 238–42.
102. L. 17.vii.1890, n. 6972, sulla beneficenza pubblica, art. 8.
103. Much of the information in this section is derived from a sampling of the ACS INT ABP source; specifically I looked for orphanage references over the period 1904–1912 in the following provinces: Milan, Naples, Padua, Rome, Siena, Syracuse.
104. ACS INT ABP b. 138, f. 26038.185.200bis.
105. ACS INT ABP 1910–12 b. 209 f. 26069.217; 1910–12 b. 38 f. 25059.5; 1904–06 b. 167 f. 26058.33.61.
106. A total of 36,000 orphans divided into 12 different age groups suggests about 3,000 institutionalized orphans of each age. Presumably age groups might increase in size with increasing age because of the increasing probability with age of being orphaned, but at the same time decrease because of orphan mortality and orphanage leaving at ages below 18. About 400 3 to 6 year old foundling home admissions per year might translate, for example, into about 400 five-year-old orphans in foundling homes, a figure considerably below an estimated 3000 for older ages in orphanages.
107. As described in n. 103, my archival research on orphans was limited to six provinces. Other cities may also have had similar institutions, though see below for a suggestion that they did not.
108. ACS INT ABP 1904–06 b. 46 f. 25069.164; 1907–09 b. 172 f. 26069.169.455.

2 Emigrating Children

1. ACS INT DGPS Pol. Giud. 1913–15 b. 53–bis; Somenzi 1994, 90 also refers to Paretta.
2. On the 1908 earthquake see *Enciclopedia Italiana*. Rome, Treccani, 1934, vol. 23, 8; Barone 1987, 361–65.
3. ACS INT DGPS Pol. giud. b. 290, f. 11900.f; for a subsequent evaluation of Santol, see “La traite des petits enfants,” *Le Matin* (Paris) May 31, 1910.
4. The *zampognari* technically played the *zampogna*, a sort of bagpipe, but the term came to be used generally for these mountain-dwelling musicians of the *mezzogiorno*; see e.g. Catalani 1878.
5. These issues have already received a certain amount of scholarly attention. Two decades ago, Ferrari (1983) briefly explored both the *professioni girovaghe* debate and the glass works scandal (see below). Subsequently, Zucchi (1992) has devoted a monograph to the *professioni girovaghe* in the 1870s and 1880s, focusing primarily on the receiving end (Paris, London, New York); the parallel between *professioni girovaghe* and apprenticeship—overstated it seems to me—comes from him. More recently, Di Bello and Nuti (2001) have offered a comprehensive study of the *professioni girovaghe*, glass works and other categories of child emigration (though not including emigration for the purpose

of prostitution, an admittedly small category as they set 15 as their age cut off), primarily from the sending end and for the period between unification and World War I. Protasi (1999) instead has taken a careful look at the glass works emigration with the important and added benefit of consultation of local archival sources in the sending provinces of Caserta and Frosinone. For more detailed reference to many of the sources mentioned here, I refer the reader especially to these last two works.

6. Di Bello and Nuti 2001, 72–99; throughout the 1868–1873 parliamentary discussion, legislators refer to these practices as an ancient evil; see note 9 below.
7. Atti C. disc. January 30, 1868, 3861.
8. Both can be found (the Société italienne de bienfaisance excerpted and translated into Italian) as appendices to the Guerzoni *relazione* of 1873 (see note that follows); the De Luca report also appeared in *Gazzetta Ufficiale* June 26, 1868.
9. The *iter parlamentare* of the *professioni girovaghe* law is the following:

Atti C. disc. January 30, 1868, 3861 (Carlo Arrivabene's comments)

Atti C. disc. May 18, 1868, 6040 (*interpellanza* Guerzoni-Oliva)

Atti C. disc. May 21, 1868, 6139–50 (*svolgimento*, including Guerzoni's *discorso*)

Atti S. D.l. (X leg., sess. 1867–68) N.183 (*disegno di legge* Menabrea, pres. November 18, 1869, which only referred to *professioni girovaghe* practiced outside of Italy)

Atti S. D.l. (X leg., sess. 1869–70) N. 2-A (with *relazione* De Falco, February 26, 1870)

Atti S. disc. May 9, 1870, 609–28; May 28, 1870, 638–54; May 30, 1870, 655–74; May 31, 1870, 675–90; June 1, 1870, 692–701; June 7, 1870, 79 (approved)

This version, however, did not make it to the Chamber of Deputies before the end of the legislature.

Atti C. D.l. (XI leg., sess. 1871–72) N.142-A (pres. November 22, 1872)

This *disegno* is accompanied by Guerzoni's *relazione* which is fundamental to any study of this debate. As mentioned in the previous note, that *relazione* includes a series of appendices such as the Paris Welfare Society report (abridged) and De Luca's report from New York.

Atti C. disc. May 21, 1873, 6559–66; May 22, 1873, 6594–612; May 26, 1873, 6708–12; May 27, 1873, 6751 (approved)

Atti S. D.l. (XI leg., sess. 1871–72) N. 121 (pres. May 29, 1873)

Atti S. D.l. (XI leg., sess. 1873) N. 8 (pres. 19 November 1873)

Atti S. disc. December 11, 1873, 51–64; December 13, 1873, 101 (approved)

Atti C. D.l. (XI leg., sess. 1873–74) N. 55 (pres. December 14, 1873)

Atti C. disc. December 17, 1873, 629–32; December 18, 1873, 673 (approved)

Legge December 21, 1873, N. 1733.

The debate is treated in more detail in Di Bello and Nuti 2001, 21–50; see also Zucchi 1992, ch. 5. In addition to the documents included with Guerzoni's 1872 *relazione*, see Guerzoni 1868, Du Camp 1870, Catalani 1878.

10. L. March 20, 1865, n. 2248 allegato B, art. 63.
11. Though these contracts seem to have predated the 1865 law. Angelini has documented their existence in 1857 (Angelini 1992).

12. "saltimbanchi, ciurmatori, ciarlatani, suonatori o cantanti ambulanti, saltatori di corda, indovini o spiegatori di sogni, espositori di animali, questuanti e simili."
13. Zucchi 1992, 75, 125–8; on the French law see also Schafer 1997, 53–7.
14. On Paulucci di Calboli, see the introductory sections to Paulucci di Calboli 1996 as well as the sources cited in Protasi 1999.
15. Paulucci di Calboli 1996 is an Italian translation of *Larmes et sourires*.
16. Paulucci di Calboli 1893, 2, 5, 176.
17. See, for example, the references in Paulucci di Calboli 1996, 20, n. 4.
18. Sitta 1894. For another testimony to the continued violation of the 1873 Guerzoni Law, see Commissione per la statistica 1902, 75–7.
19. In 1866, the Italian consul in Marseilles identified the area around Viggiano as the sending area for the child wanderers. Guerzoni 1868 and Du Camp 1870 both repeat the list of the Paris Italian Welfare Society, 5 villages around Viggiano and one near Sora. In 1868 De Luca, the consul from New York lists 4 towns around Viggiano, while in 1872, following more study, Guerzoni refers generally to Caserta, Calabria and Basilicata but his list of 6 villages are all around Viggiano. Catalani in 1878 does list Sora, Isernia and Caserta in addition to Potenza (see note 9 above).
20. Isernia is in Molise; Sora instead was at the time part of Caserta province (Campania) but in 1927 was transferred to Frosinone (Lazio).
21. On glass production at this time, see Scelsi 1900 and the entries "bouteille" (v.7) and "verre" (v.31) in *La Grande Encyclopédie* (Paris, s.d. c.1905)
22. The entry "verre" in *La Grande Encyclopédie* (v.31) describes an important innovation in glass furnaces in 1887; the new furnaces had much increased capacity and operated continuously, just as did the bottle making furnaces described in the various reports consulted here.
23. These numbers, taken from several contemporary reports, seem high though not perhaps for the 16-hour shifts described below; it apparently took about one minute to make a bottle which means that an *ouvrier* working without a rest for 8 hours might produce about 480 bottles, surely an unsustainable rhythm.
24. The important steps in the glassworks story are listed below and include much description of the miserable lives of the *petits italiens*, possibly exaggerated for effect. They are discussed in more detail in Protasi 1999 and Di Bello and Nuti 2001 and include the following (in chronological order):

Caccia Dominiani 1896

Paulucci di Calboli 1897 (also in Paulucci di Calboli 1996)

Interrogazione Socci (Atti C. disc. January 27, 1898, 3909–10)

Paulucci di Calboli 1898

Interrogazione Socci (Atti C. disc. November 22, 1898, 64–5)

Puccini 1898

Scelsi 1900

Prato 1901

Cafiero 1901

Interpellanze Socci-Rossi (Atti C. disc. May 27, 1901, 4402–14)

Schiaparelli 1901

Einaudi and Prato 1901

Sommi-Picenardi 1902

Perrod 1902

Schiaparelli 1903.

Gallarati-Scotti 1903

Interesting to note, the Italian commentators seem to have unanimously overlooked the irony that in Italy (till the 1902 law) nine-year-olds could still legally work in factories.

25. See the *interrogazioni* and *interpellanze* cited in the previous note.
26. Einaudi and Prato 1901 (1111 for the quotations); *Bollettino dell'Emigrazione* (1902): 31; Gallarati-Scotti 1903; Majetti 1932; Perrod 1902; Sommi-Picenardi 1902.
27. L. December 30, 1888, n. 5866; R.d. January 10, 1889, n. 5892; Codice Zanardelli (1889), art. 416.
28. Atti C. disc. November 30, 1897, 3635; Atti C. disc. January 27, 1898, 3909–10. For the full *iter parlamentare* of the Emigration Law see the following:
 Atti C. disc. June 30, 1896, 6868–74 (Pantano's first important speech)
 Atti C. disc. December 1, 1896, 7773–9
 Atti C. disc. December 7, 1896, 7992
 Atti C. disc. December 8, 1896, 8031–2
 Atti C. D.l. (leg. XIX, sess. 1895–96) N. 353 (Pantano et al.), December 8, 1896
 Atti C. disc. April 13, 1897, 185–91
 Atti C. disc. July 2, 1897, 2717–19
 Atti C. D.l. (leg. XX, sess. 1897) N. 141 (Pantano et al.), July 2, 1897
 Atti C. disc. February 24, 1898, 4706–7
 Atti C. D.l. (leg. XX, sess. 1897–98) N. 244 (Visconti-Venosta et al.), February 24, 1898
 Atti C. disc. November 22, 1898, 67
 Atti C. D.l. (leg. XX, sess. 1898–99) N. 41 (Canevaro et al.), November 22, 1898
 Atti C. D.l. (leg. XX, sess. 1898–99) N. 41 e 41bis (Canevaro-Pantano), March 3, 1899
 Atti C. disc. November 20, 1899, 73
 Atti C. disc. November 24, 1899, 144–5
 Atti C. D.l. (leg. XX, sess. 1899) N. 97 (Visconti-Venosta et al.), November 28, 1899
 Atti C. disc. November 28, 1899, 215–24
 Atti C. disc. December 2, 1899, 366–71 (another important Pantano speech)
 Atti C. D.l. (leg. XX, sess. 1899) N. 97 bis (Pantano et al.), December 2, 1899
 Atti C. disc. February 3, 1900, 1321
 Atti C. D.l. (leg. XX, sess. 1899) N. 97 e 97bis-A (Luzzatti), February 3, 1900
 Atti C. D.l. (leg. XXI, sess. 1900) N. 44 (Visconti-Venosta), July 1, 1900
 Atti C. D.l. (leg. XXI, sess. 1900) N. 44 e 44bis-A (Luzzatti-Pantano), July 5, 1900.
 The Chamber of Deputies debate over this final version ran from November 23 to December 2, 1900, when it was approved. It then proceeded to the Senate.

Atti S. D.I. (leg. XXI, sess. 1900–01) N. 29 + 29-A (Lampertico), December 4, 1900
The Senate debate ran from January 21, 1929, 1901, at the end of which it was approved.

L. January 31, 1901, N. 23 (the law itself).

The *regolamento* can be found in *Bollettino del Ministero degli Affari Esteri*, August 14, 1901.

29. Atti C. disc. May 27, 1901, 4411; Atti C. disc. June 14, 1901, 5176.
30. France introduced volunteer inspectors in 1841 and a mixed system of paid and volunteer inspectors in 1874, subsequently reinforced in 1892 (Heywood 1988, 237–42, 264–73, 318). For all its imperfection, the French system was far more effective than the Italian (see chapter 3).
31. For the 1904 Convention, see *Bollettino del Ministero degli Affari Esteri* (1904): 1027–36; Atti C. D.I. (leg. XXI) N. 570 (June 4, 1904) and 570-A; Atti C. disc. June 29, 1904, 14894–6; June 30, 1904, 14968; Atti S. D.I. (leg. XXI) N. 403; Atti S. disc. July 6, 1904; L. September 29, Sept, N. 572.
32. For the Accord, see Atti C. D.I. (leg. XXIII) N. 602 (November 29, 1910) and N. 602-A (December 15, 1910); Atti C. disc. January 27, 1911, 11516–30, 11552; Atti S. D.I. (leg. XXIII) N. 446 (January 31, 1911) + N. 446-A; Atti S. disc. March 9, 1911, 4729; March 10, 1911, 4753; L. March 3, 1912, n. 214.
33. These committees were created by the 1901 law.
34. For a more general discussion of prostitution in Italy, see Gibson 1986; for the white slave trade see Gibson 1986, 71–84.
35. On the White Slave Trade generally in Europe, see Corbin 1990, 275–98.
36. On Stead and the White Slave Trade in England, see Walkowitz 1980, 246–56.
37. Richard 1908, 113–14. On Butler's campaigns see Barry 1995, 95–121; Petrie 1971; van Drenth and de Haan 1999, 83–95. On her activities in 1877, see Petrie 1971, 194–71.
38. "La tratta delle schiave bianche in Italia," *Il Dovere* (Roma, February 27, 1881).
39. ACS INT DGPS Polizia Giudiziaria 1913–15, b. 53 bis, f. 10900.21. Following approval of the Paris Accord on the suppression of the white slave trade in 1905 (see below), the DGPS was identified as the authority in Italy charged with centralizing information on the trade (art. 1). It is likely then that these files, dating as noted above as early as 1894 but collected in the 1913–1915 folder, were gathered together after the fact. See also Somenzi 1994.
40. ACS INT DGPS Polizia Giudizionaria 1913–15, b. 53 bis, f. 10900.21.
41. *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1905): 676–81; reports of the participants vary. Paulucci di Calboli was one of the Italian representatives and lists the following: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Spain, and Switzerland (1902a, 206).
42. Cafiero 1901, 588; "Tratta di fanciulli e fanciulle nel mezzogiorno" *Corriere della Sera* November 29, 1901.
43. Garofalo 1901; Atti S. disc. January 21, 1901, 927.
44. Paulucci di Calboli 1902b; the description of Buenos Aires comes from a representative of the Comité protecteur de la femme, probably writing in 1905; ACS DGPS Pol. Giud. 1913–15 b. 53bis, f. 10900.21.

45. *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1905): 676–81; *Bollettino del Ministero degli Affari Esteri* (1905): 225–31.
46. Atti C. disc. March 9, 1903, 6235.
47. For Socci's relevant *interrogazione* and *interpellanza* and discussion of the latter, see Atti C. disc. June 21, 1901, 5526; C. disc. December 5, 1902, 4364; C. disc. March 9, 1903, 6232–8.
48. R.d. April 9, 1905, n. 171.
49. Corbin 1990, 285. Inclined as we are to accept the judgment of Corbin (and others), it is distressing to note that what was likely exaggerated in ca. 1900 Europe seems to have become all too real (and largely ignored by public opinion) in the global economy of ca. 2000; see Landesman 2004.
50. AGS DGPS Polizia giudiziaria 1913–15 b. 53bis f. 10900.21; Somenzi 1994.
51. R.d. January 31, 1901, n. 36; the emigration law and norms together with passport law and instructions can be found in a special issue of the *Bollettino del Ministero degli Affari Esteri* (n. 204, August 14, 1901). Until that time passport issuance had been regulated by a pre-unification measure that may have functioned in a small and relatively well-administered state like Piedmont when the level of emigration was low, but certainly found scant observance in the enlarged kingdom (R.d. November 13, 1857).
52. According to *capo* II of the 1901 Emigration Law, emigrants were defined as third-class ship passengers traveling to points beyond the Suez Canal or the Straits of Gibraltar; and shipping lines and agents were forbidden to issue tickets to these emigrants unless they had passports (see articles 6 and 19). The law further stipulated that shippers operating in Italy obtain a license from the CGE, and that only the (Italian-citizen) representatives of those approved shippers could act as agents. Those agents in turn could only sell tickets for voyages originating in the approved Italian ports. On “clandestine” migration by way of northern European ports (including the specific targeting of non-authorized Swiss agents), see Altavilla 1911. For the police reports referred to, see ACS INT DGPS Pol. Giud. 1910–12, b. 288, f. 11900.2 and 1913–15, b. 90, f. 11900.2.
53. R.d. November 20, 1902, n. 523; *Bollettino del Ministero degli Affari Esteri* (1914): 47–8; Altavilla 1911.
54. Interesting to note, the passport requirement was waived for minors traveling overseas with their parents; presumably they would be listed on their father or mother's passport. Passports were not required for all working-class “emigrants,” regardless of destination, till 1919.
55. See, for example, circ. December 21, 1901 in *Bollettino del Ministero degli Affari Esteri* (1901): 1125, circ. June 13, 1903 in *Bollettino del Ministero degli Affari Esteri* (1903): 552–3.
56. ACS INT DGPS Pol. Giud. 1913–15, b. 15, f. 11900.17.A; Berio 1912; Riccio 1913; Scanni 1913; Protasi 1999 also discusses these studies (232) and documents the continued presence of Italian glassworkers into the 1930s (213–14).
57. MAIC 1880, 325–77; on the brickwork emigration see also Di Bello and Nuti 2001, 114–22; for the Udine material see ACS INT DGPS Pol. Giud. 1910–12, b. 288, f. 11900.

58. For the *iter parlamentare* of this law see: Atti C. D.l. (leg. XXII) N. 700 (March 17, 1907); Atti C. D.l. (leg. XXIII) N. 243 (September 18, 1909); discussion of the law in the Chamber of Deputies took place between June 15 and 21, 1910 after which it went to the Senate; L. 17 July 1910, n. 538.
59. Decreto MAE February 14, 1911, *Bollettino del Ministero degli Affari Esteri* (1911): 52–3; See also ACS INT DGPS Pol. Giud. 1910–12 b. 288 f.11900.
60. ACS INT DGPS Pol. Giud. 1913–15, b.90, f.11900.2. Interesting to note, the prefect's report referred to articles 13 and 31 of the Emigration Law (which technically only applied to overseas migration) and article 416 of the penal code (inducement to emigrate on false pretenses); nonetheless, the spirit of the case clearly reflects the 1911 decree and stands out from most other clandestine emigration cases in the police files in that it deals with emigration to Europe.
61. Comitato italiano contro la Tratta delle Bianche 1906; Comitato italiano contro la tratta delle bianche 1908; Buttafuoco 1988.
62. Numbering of these conferences was problematic as some were more or less official. The Paris conference of 1902 (first) and 1910 (second according to the official publication of the French Foreign Ministry (Ministère des Affaires Étrangères 1910)) were the most important though in between there were conferences in, at least, London, Paris (1906 and “third” according to Turin 1912, 261), Vienna, Madrid (1910 and fourth according to a source in ACS INT DGPS Pol. Giud. 1913–15 f.10900.21). The 1913 London conference was often referred to as the fifth (ACS INT DGPS Pol. Giud. 1913–15 f. 10900.21 and Vigliani 1913, 690).
63. *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1911): 373–87; *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1913): 44–5
64. For a similar conclusion, see Gibson 1986, 83. See also Vigliani 1913; *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1913): 200–4, 370–2; ACS INT DGPS Pol. Giud. 1913–15 buste 54–59.
65. ACS INT DGPS Pol. Giud. 1910–12, b. 288, f. 11900.2; see also Scanni 1913.

3 Working Children

1. L. February 11, 1886, n. 3657.
2. L. June 19, 1902, n. 242.
3. The child labor literature is considerable. For a few recent examples on Britain and France see Heywood 1988; Nardinelli 1990; Tuttle 1999; Weissbach 1989. Nardinelli 1990 includes a chapter on international comparisons.
4. See Travaglini 1933, 63 for Piedmont census figures.
5. Sacchi 1842; Petitti di Roreto 1969. Terminology was not always consistent, but in most of the literature and parliamentary discussion reviewed below, *fanciullo* refers to those under 15 years of age and *adulto* to anyone over that age. Hence any measures seeking to regulate the work of, for example, 15–18 year olds was by definition not dealing with *lavoro dei fanciulli* or child labor. *Ragazzo* might also be used for children under the age of 12.

6. I assume that Sacchi is still referring to *ragazzi* under 12; Sacchi 1842, 247–9. It seems in any case a large but not unreasonable figure, namely 25% of the population of Lecco consisting of child laborers. For the sake of comparison, using the Coale-Demeny south model life table with GRR at 2.5 and e° at 40, one would expect about 20% of the population between the ages of 5 and 15. The Lecco industries may of course have attracted child workers from other, probably rural, areas (Coale and Demeny 1983, 430).
7. This description is of course a general one. It applies to late nineteenth-century Italy though procedures varied over time and space. In part it is taken from Antonino Di San Giuliani's parliamentary *relazione* of 1895 (C. Atti (leg. XIX) N. 59-A (June 13, 1895), 38–41).
8. Cento Bull 1989; these figures refer specifically to factory industry which explains why they are so much lower than Sacchi's figures cited above for Lombardy alone in the 1840s; Sacchi counted domestic industry as well. On textile manufacturing see also Ramella 1984; Granata and Scalpelli 1992; Romano 1992.
9. According to the 1901 census about 10% of the Italian population was aged 10–14. The male population of Sicily instead was about 1.8 million. See ISTAT 1976, 12–13.
10. The debate leading up to the first Italian Child Labor Law took place in every Italian legislature from the eleventh to the fifteenth and can be followed in the Parliamentary Acts and Discussions. References, where relevant, are given. On the pre-1886 debate, see also the fundamental studies of Monteleone 1974 and Ronchi 1990, especially Monteleone for his detailed study of each phase of the debate. Both authors study child labor legislation primarily as an important chapter in the history of social legislation and the "social question" rather than as an aspect of the history of childhood in Italy. Needless to say various of the sources used below are also cited by Monteleone and Ronchi.
11. L. November 20, 1859, n. 3755; Regolamento December 23, 1865.
12. The Senate debate of the health code ran from March 12 to 29 April. The excerpt from Maggiorani is Atti S. disc. March 12, 1873, 1900.
13. Atti C. D.I. (XII leg.) N. 72 (February 2, 1875); the military statistics were compiled by Federico Torre and published in an annual volume: *Della leva sui giovani nati nell'anno 18__*. *Relazione al Ministero della Guerra*. Rome. The category in question is "Petto: deformità del casso toracico." The issue of deformity would become a constant in the *carusu* debate. In 1891 Angelo Mosso, whom Anson Rabinbach describes as the "Galileo" of modern fatigue research" (Rabinbach 1990, 7), cited far more dramatic statistics according to which in the period 1881–1884 only 253 of 3672 sulfur workers (7%) were fit for military service. In his own 1894 study, Colajanni reviewed these various figures, rejecting Mosso's as absurd. He did, however, find in comparing 1872–1873 military rejection rates in Piazza Armerina (East of Caltanissetta) that the sulfur workers had strikingly high rates of rejection for insufficient height (*mancanza di statura*), twice as high as those for peasants in the same province (Colajanni 1894, 648–52). For another contemporary discussion of

these various figures see MAIC 1907, 5–6. Squarzina (1963, 124–6) also describes Mosso's figures as exaggerated.

14. Atti S. disc. December 6, 1877, 1922–1930. Contemporary observations regarding Lercara were also made by Giuseppe Bruzzo (Bruzzo 1875). The depths of Palermitan mines are reported together with the conscript information appended to the earlier mining-law proposal (Atti C. D.l. (XII leg.) N. 72 [February 2, 1875]). By this time the Sicilian Society for Political Economy—representing Sicilian mining interests—had published a study describing the conditions of the *carusi* in glowing terms while Giordano would publish his observations a few years later; see Ronchi 1990, 20–1. Giordano's references regarding the silk industry were taken from a study by former Interior Minister Serafino Bonomi (1873) as well as a letter from a Doctor Pini. On Giordano, see also MAIC 1904, 5–6.
15. The model may have come from France where similar investigations were carried out in 1837 and 1867; see Weissbach 1989, 39–47, 159–60.
16. MAIC 1880; the minister at the time was Benedetto Cairoli; for Luzzatti's law, which he proposed together with former Prime Minister Marco Minghetti, see Atti C. disc. November 29, 1879, 8725–9; in a revised form it appeared as an official legislative proposal (Atti C. D.l. (leg. XIII) N. 74) but got no further than that.
17. MAIC 1880, 698–797; the observation that many *carusi* were illegitimate children would be repeated in Barone Russo 1914, 142.
18. MAIC 1880, 627–64 (Campania), 665–80 (Puglia), 505 (Marches).
19. MAIC 1880, 325–77; in Italy, children apparently also worked as mason's assistants on a large scale in Cuneo (Piedmont) (MAIC 1880, 27–48).
20. See, e.g., Rabinbach 1990, 32.
21. Atti S. D.l. (leg. XV) N. 89.
22. Atti S. D.l. (leg. XV) N. 89-A, prospetti A e B.
23. Atti C. disc. 9. June 1880, 184–7; Atti C. D.l. (Leg. XIV) N. 76, n. 76–bis.
24. Atti S. D.l. (leg. XV) N. 89; N. 89-A.
25. For the parliamentary debates, see Atti S. disc. December 10, 1885, 4443–67 (4448–61 for Rossi); Atti C. disc. February 8, 1886, 16598–620 (16598–9 for Costa, 16599 for Maffi, 16611–15 for Luzzatti, 16615–17 for Minister Grimaldi); For Luzzatti's committee report see Atti C. D.l. (leg. XV/1) N. 393-A. The law was published as L. February 11, 1886, n. 3657.
26. The law was to go into effect six months after its publication in the *Gazzetta ufficiale* or August 18, 1886. On the drawing up of the *regolamento* and the debate surrounding it, see Monteleone 1974, 272–4; it was approved by r.d. September 17, 1886.
27. Following the French example, work booklets had been introduced for adult workers as early as 1829 in preunification Piedmont (Davis 1988, 107).
28. The *regolamento* called for annual reports (*relazioni*) though that of 1890 was the first. The observations regarding the silk industry exemption and sulfur mining problems are taken from that report: Atti C. D.l. (leg. XVI) Doc. XIX (February 18, 1890).
29. Remarks about the nonobservance of the 1886 law would characterize all of the parliamentary debate leading up to the second law of 1902; it is reviewed

below. In one of Di San Giuliano's reports he cites the following figures relative to factory and mine visits for 1899–1900:

visits by inspectors	44
visits by mining engineers	2880
visits by <i>polizia giudiziaria</i>	52,122

Out of 655 confirmed violations, 607 were detected by the police. For Maffi and Luzzatti's comments, see Atti C. disc. May 21, 1889, 1695; for Loria see Loria 1901, 38; for the 1895 observation Antozzi 1974, 300.

30. For the comments of Senator Massarini, see Atti S. disc. December 10, 1885, 4443–8.
31. See Antozzi 1974.
32. For Catholic hostility to the Italian state see most any issue of *Civiltà Cattolica* in the 1890s, the tone of which differed dramatically from that of other Catholic journals like Toniolo's *Rivista Italiana di Scienze Sociali e Discipline Ausiliare*.
33. This passage is from paragraph 45 of the encyclical. For this English language version see Leo XIII 1903, 234–5.
34. see *Rivista Italiana di Scienze Sociali e Discipline Ausiliare* comments: 1893, vol. II, 337–8; 1893, vol. III, 316–17; 1902, V. XXVIII, 511–15; Cantono 1902; R. C. 1900.
35. On these positions of the *crispini* in 1886 see Ronchi 1990, 46–48. These sorts of concerns about the moral degeneration of children would become ever more acute in the 1890s, and we shall return to them below. For the time being, Crispi's previous hostility relative to the Berti Law may help to explain Nicotera's seeming indifference to calls in 1891 for new legislation. Indeed it is no surprise that the next law did not come until after Crispi's definitive fall from power in 1896 (Atti C. disc. June 15, 1891, 3517, 4286–8).
36. Terminology again is not always precise, but *fanciullo*, the term used in the title of all the proposals and laws here discussed normally applies to boys and girls up to the age of 15. Various measures applied to minor-age females, namely under the age of 21, but there was great resistance to the introduction of any limitations on the freedom of work for males past their fifteenth birthday (and so *adulti* as opposed to *fanciulli* even though still *minorenni*).
37. Atti C. disc. November 23, 1893, 1893; C. disc. May 5, 1894, 8386; Atti C. D.l. (leg. XVIII, 1a sess.) N. 242 and N. 242-A; Atti C. disc. December 6, 1894, 28; Atti C. D.l. (leg. XVIII, 2a sess.) N. 15.
38. Atti C. disc. June 13, 1895, 50–1; Atti C. disc. November 28, 1895, 2597; Atti C. D.l. (leg. XIX) N. 59 and N. 59-A (Di San Giuliano).
39. Atti C. disc. May 14, 1897, 642.
40. Atti C. D.l. (leg. XX, 1a sess.) N. 287 (April 20, 1898); Atti C. D.l. (leg. XX, 2a sess.) N. 180 (April 27, 1899).
41. Atti C. disc. March 21, 1898, 5453–6.
42. For a more negative assessment of the period see Quine 2002. On Giolitti and social legislation see also Barbagallo 1995, 70–80, 85–122; Ragionieri 1976, 1866–73.
43. The first limited Italian maternity fund was introduced in 1912; see Quine 2002, 84–9.

44. In an interesting comparison, the original 1833 British Factory Act, which regulated child labor in the textile industries, specifically exempted silk manufacture.
45. Atti C. D.l. (leg. XXI) N. 139 (December 2, 1900-Carcano); Atti C. D.l. (leg. XXI) N. 280 (May 24, 1901—Turati et. al.)—this proposal was also published in the 1 January 1902 issue of *Critica Sociale*; Atti C. D.l. (leg. XXI) N. 139-A e N. 280-A (30 November 1901—Di San Giuliano). On elementary schools see also Cives 1990; Vigo 1993.
46. For the 1902 Chamber debate and vote, see Atti C. disc. March 18 (254–90); March 19 (300–34); March 20 (345–81); March 21 (395–424); March 22 (455–72); March 23 (475–512, 515). Page number references in the pages that follow should be referred back to this list.
47. See Pick 1989 for this context.
48. Gavazzi gives figures for Milan, though the numbers suggest that his Milan may include all of Lombardy, of 10,300 9–12 year-olds out of 93,582 silk workers. He then applies the same percentage to the official statistics for silk workers in all of Italy, the 172,000 figure, to get 19,000. Derivation of the 30–50,000 figure is not offered (301–5).
49. Atti S. D.l. (leg. XXI, 2a sess.) N. 9 and N. 9-A; Atti S. disc. June 12, 1902, 446–60, 485.
50. Where work was carried out in two shifts, night work only referred to the hours between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.
51. L. June 19, 1902, n. 242, published July 7, 1902, n. 157.
52. R.d. January 29, 1903, n. 41, published February 28, 1903, n. 49.
53. *Rivista Italiana di Scienze Sociali e Discipline Ausiliare* 28 (1902): 665–66; Cantono 1903.
54. *Giornale degli Economisti* 27 (1903): 278–9, 399–401.
55. MAIC 1906 which also includes discussion of the exemptions referred to earlier.
56. *Rivista Italiana di Scienze Sociali e Discipline Ausiliare* 41 (1906): 155–6.
57. L. July 8, 1904, n. 182. Upper elementary school consisted of 2 more years of school (usually during ages 9–12). This requirement was largely theoretical as there were still *comuni* without lower elementary schools and of course still more lacked grades 4 and 5. The new 1904 requirement was a questionable move on the part of Italian legislators to introduce a law which represented for the moment an unrealizable ideal. Very likely the fact that Italy's school-leaving age (9) was low compared to that of other Western countries (mostly 12 or 14) influenced that choice.
58. ACS Min. INT DGPS Pol.Giud. 1910–12, b. 232, f. 10085, b. 3.
59. R.d. August 31, 1910, n. 665; also published in *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1910): 809–12.
60. On the process leading up to the 1907 law, see Atti C. D.l. (leg. XXII) N. 227 (June 20, 1905) + N. 227-A (February 1, 1906); Atti C. disc. May 4, 1906, 7676–92, 7694–702; May 5, 1906, 7736–41; Atti S. D.l. (leg. XXII) N. 327 + 327-A (July 3, 1906); Atti S. disc. June 5, 1907, 6302–24; June 6, 1907, 6330–5; Atti C. D.l. (leg. XXII) N. 227-B (June 10, 1907); Atti C. disc. July 2, 1907, 17321–3; July 3, 1907, 17511; L. July 7, 1907, N. 416, published July 10, 1907, n. 163; the 1902 law, and 1907 modifications were then combined into a *Testo unico*: r.d. November 10, 1907; n. 818 with its own *regolamento* (approved with r.d. June 14, 1909).

61. On pellagra, which persisted (while declining) in northern and central Italy during the first two decades of the twentieth century, see De Bernardi 1984; for a brief discussion in English, see Roe 1973, 37–45. For a 1907 evaluation of child labor in industry see Chiri 1907–8.

4 Children behind Bars: Reformatories and Juvenile Delinquency

1. ACS: INT DG Carceri, Arch. gen. (1896–1905), b. 96, f. 32/1/B, nn. 18, 142, 143.
2. See Ignatieff 1978, esp. 12 (on the relationship between confinement and unemployment) and 26 (on wage discipline); for similar comments relative to Italy, see Melossi and Pavarini 1981, 63–95.
3. Petit 1990, 2; see also Ignatieff 1978.
4. For one example, from Florence, of the multiple functions of institutions and the varied places where children might end up, see Nuti 1992.
5. O'Brien 1982, 134 lists paternal correction as part of the (August 5) 1850 law. Badinter 1992, 54, n. 2 instead states that the law did not specify what was to be done with these cases, many of which ended up in departmental prisons. Badinter (*ibid.*) also refers to the law's specification that separate quarters be reserved for more serious offenders (crimes with penalties over 2 years), but these were never built.
6. On Italian prisons, see Carrafiello 1998; Davis 1988, 151–5, 213–16; Melossi and Pavarini 1981; Neppi Modona 1973.
7. The literature on the incarceration of minors in nineteenth-century and Liberal Italy includes Fabi 1983; Nuti 1992; Rossi 1983.
8. On the Piedmont elite, see Cardoza 1997.
9. The Italian term is *educazione* which does not translate well as “education” insofar as it entails not scholastic instruction but proper behavior, good manners, and so on.
10. The relative articles in the criminal codes are: 1839, arts. 92–95; 1859, arts. 87–90; 1889 arts. 53–56; see also Beltrani-Scalia 1879, 327–37.
11. Codice Civile 1865, art. 222.
12. L. June 30, 1889 (pubblica sicurezza), articles 113–115; the Italian terms are *ozioso*, *vagabondo* and *diffamato*. On begging and vagabondage, see also Davis 1988, 66–71, 219–20; vagabonds and layabouts under age 16 had previously been covered by art. 72 of the 1859 criminal code.
13. Cerfberr 1839, 8–12 refers to L'Ergastolo as a women's, rather than girls', prison founded in 1838.
14. Nor was this an exclusively Italian issue as the question of government inspection of private reformatories was raised at the Second International Penitentiary Congress in 1878 (Bianchi 1902, 63–4).
15. Biffi 1876; Canevelli 1900; Morici 1900b; for an account of one private reformatory that housed both parental correction and vagabondage cases, the Pia Casa del Patronato pei Minorenni Corrigendi of Florence, see Nuti 1992, 101–12.
16. Nuti (1992, 111), however, refers to a transfer of girls to L'Ambrogiana in 1886 so it may have continued to function as a private reformatory.

17. R.d. January 27, 1861, N. 4681, arts. 152, 238.
18. Ministero dell'Interno 1880; Ministero dell'Interno—Direzione Generale delle Carceri, *Statistica delle carceri 1894–95*. s.l., s.d.
19. The norms also contemplated the presence of adults in the *case di custodia* (strictly separated), but I have found no evidence that any ever were.
20. L. December 20, 1877, n. 4189.
21. R.d. February 1, 1891, N. 260; on the 1891 norms see also Neppi Modona 1973, esp. 1921–26, who refers to “that monstrous normative monument that constitutes the Prison Norms of 1891” (1913).
22. The term Casa di Custodia was from 1891 applied to institutes housing mentally infirm individuals convicted of crimes.
23. *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* 39 (1914): 447. The earliest reference I have found to the Forlì institute is Beltrani-Scalia 1898, 425; on the other hand, a 1907 *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* piece cites Luigi Facta, then a Giolittian undersecretary, describing Urbino as the *only* true *casa di correzione* in Italy at the time (*Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* 32 [1907]: 247).
24. Beltrani-Scalia 1879, 327; Beltrani-Scalia founded the *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* in 1871 and directed it for three decades; he served as general director of prisons for the periods 1879–March 1885, August 1887–July 1891, November 1895–July 1898; see Doria 1909; Rodotà 1966.
25. R.d. November 7, 1909, n. 838; see Commissione delinquenza dei minorenni 1912, vol. 1.
26. *Statistica giudiziaria penale del Regno d'Italia per l'anno 1863*. Turin, Botta, 1865–67: parte II, tabella VII.
27. Biffi 1878 (Biffi's figures can also be found in the relevant volumes of Ministero dell'Interno—Direzione Generale delle carceri, *Statistica delle carceri*); Doria 1910b.
28. The figure for adults 1860–1900 was also about 50% (Davis 1988, 213).
29. But for a proposed Lombrosian response that incorporates Montessorian lessons, see Franchi 1910b.
30. See, e.g., Danise 1910; S. De Sanctis 1910; Franchi 1910a; Mazzarisi 1910a; Quarta 1908.
31. D'Alessandro 1910b, 232; see also Martinazzoli 1911.
32. On the European-wide concern about degeneration in this period, see again Pick 1989.
33. Nonetheless, Benelli 1902, 426 reports, for example, on the continued mixing of minors and adults in the jail at Aquila.
34. I have come across no evidence that the girls in Perugia took similar tours, and one imagines that concern about the girls' “morality” and sexual assaults would have discouraged the practice.
35. *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* 23 (1898): 67–90, 107–28; Beltrani-Scalia 1898.
36. Morici 1899b refers to corporal punishment (*pene fisiche*) as having been eliminated from the case di educazione for some time; and Cannobbio 1913, 77 recalls an interview with a reformatory director “many years ago” who at that time still preferred the use of a good beating to deal with disciplinary problems; on the other hand it was only in 1902–1903 that Giolitti passed laws

- prohibiting the use of leg irons (*catena al piede*) and of strait jackets (*camicia di forza*) as punishment for adult prisoners (Neppi Modona 1973, 1934–35).
37. L. July 3, 1904, n. 318 and R.d. December 22, 1904, n. 716; *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* 31 (1906): 71–83.
 38. R.d. November 10, 1905, N. 572.
 39. *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* 31 (1906): 299–307; Montessori 1906; this method may correspond to what Raffaele Majetti, an important juvenile judge and child saver who arrived in Rome a couple of years later, would describe as “la scuola integrata del lavoro manuale” according to which the child inmate’s work should not be monotonous but instead “constructive/coordinated; varied; made up of movements; should require creative thought and be harmonious and attractive” (cited in M. Majetti 1932, 97). Contrary to these contemporary statements, a visit to the restored San Michele, now an exhibition space, reveals bars on the windows of all the small cells.
 40. *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* 31 (1906): 301.
 41. *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* 32 (1908): 15–20.
 42. *Regolamento pei Riformatori Governativi approvato con R. decreto 14 luglio 1907*, n. 606.
 43. *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* 33 (1908): 16–30; *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* 42 (1914): 114–16.
 44. Beltrani-Scalia called for a separate juvenile court already in 1897 (if not before) (Beltrani-Scalia 1897a, 5); see also Morici 1900a; Quarta 1908; Stoppato 1907.
 45. L. June 26, 1904, n.267; according to this law, suspended sentences could be granted for crimes carrying penalties of up to 6 months of incarceration; the maximum suspended sentence was for one year. See also Calabrese and Greco 1909.
 46. *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* 25 (1900): 244–6; Martinazzoli 1911, 197–203; the latter explores the confusing institutional history that led to the creation of his Istituto forense pedagogico.
 47. *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* 32 (1907): 339–40; Pola 1909.
 48. Beltrani-Scalia 1897b; Canevelli 1899; *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* 33 (1905): 271–9.
 49. Biffi 1876, 489; see also *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* 28 (1903): 43–6; D’Alessandro 1910b, 232.
 50. *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* 33 (1905): 274.
 51. Most of these statistics are taken from *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* 33 (1905): 271–9; see also *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* 32 (1907): 247.
 52. For minors in judicial jails, see Ministero dell’Interno-Direzione Generale delle Carceri, *Statistica delle carceri 1904–7*, 22 (relazione), 252–7 (tavole). For *condanne condizionali*, see Ministero di Grazia e Giustizia 1912, cxxxii.
 53. Commissione per la Statistica Giudiziaria e Notabile 1902, 35–40; Quarta 1908, 43 reports similar regional rates. The pattern held for adults as well; according to the Ministero di Grazia e Giustizia’s criminal statistics for 1906, for example, rates of criminal convictions per 100,000 population in Italy’s

- judicial districts ranged from the 850–1000 range (including Cagliari, Rome, Catanzaro, Naples) to the 240–400 range (including Turin, Florence, Bologna, Milan); see Ministero di Grazia e Giustizia 1909, xxiii.
54. Ministero dell'Interno—Direzione General dei carceri e riformatori, *Statistica dei riformatori*; see also Doria 1910e on issue of judicial versus carceral statistics.
 55. For two points in the ongoing debate, see Biffi 1876; Biffi 1878; Bernabò-Silorata 1909; D'Alessandro 1910a; *Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* 34 (1909): 274–6; Rossana 1909a; Rossana 1909b.
 56. Conti 1910; D'Alessandro 1910b; Franchi 1910b; Giorgianni 1910; Martinazzoli 1911; Mazzarisi 1910b (153 for quotation).
 57. Commissione delinquenza dei minorenni 1912. The code itself also appeared in several volumes of *Rivista di discipline carcerarie* in 1913–1914.
 58. Compare articles 35–53 of the Minors Code with articles 220–3, 233 of the civil code and 33, 349, 390–2 of the Zanardelli Penal Code.
 59. The 1889 Public Safety Law had imposed some restrictions on under 16 year olds in this category. L. June 30, 1889, n. 6144, art. 72.
 60. L. January 31, 1901, n. 23, arts. 2–3.
 61. On subsequent developments see Pisani 1972.
 62. Some clever historians have, nonetheless, succeeded. For one example, see Davin 1996.
 63. Morici 1900a; *Rivista di discipline carcerarie* 32 (1907): 213–19.
 64. ACS INT DG carc. a.g. 1896–1905, b. 373.
 65. ACS INT DG carc. a.g. 1896–1905, b. 267.
 66. ACS INT DG carc. a.g. 1896–1905, b. 67; G. De Sanctis 1902, 290 refers to the 30-day punishment.
 67. *Rivista di discipline carcerarie* 37 (1912): 439–41.
 68. ACS: INT DG Carceri, Arch. gen. (189–1905), b. 96, f. 32/1/B, nn. 169–80.
 69. *Regolamento pei Riformatori Governativi approvato con R. decreto 14 luglio 1907, n. 606*; Doria 1910b, 250.
 70. For the case of Naples, see Guidi 1991.
 71. See various references to sex for money in this period in Aldrich 1993.
 72. A comment in the introductory *relazione* to the 1912 reformatory statistics mentions that all state reformatories except Naples had introduced cellular sleeping arrangements, though it does not say if these cells, for example, housed single inmates. Private reformatories instead continued to employ communal sleeping arrangements (*Rivista di Discipline Carcerarie* 39 (1914): 431); in 1897, the Urbino Casa di correzione had several age-segregated dormitories each accommodating 34 boys (ACS INT DG carc. a.g. 1896–1905, b. 67).
 73. ACS GG DGPP a.g. b. 249.
 74. For another hint on working-class morality/sexuality, in a rural context, see Davis 1988, 288.
 75. For other references to homosexuality and masturbation, see, ACS GG PP a.g. b. 193; Beltrani-Scalia 1897b, 458; Morici 1899a, 319–20; Benelli 1902, 421.

5 *Salviamo il fanciullo!*

1. On Blasi, See Quine 2002, 195.
2. See also Gambero 1961; Aporti had founded an *asilo* for well-to-do children two years before, namely one for which parents had to pay. Although both Gambero and Catarsi and Genovesi identify Aporti's 1830 *asilo* in Cremona as Italy's first, various other sources refer to an 1829 effort in his home town of San Martino dell'Argine outside Mantua. See, for example, Atti C. D.I. (leg. XV, 1884) N. 215 and 215-A (Garelli), 1, though the *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* at one point corrects that date putting it at 1835 (*Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1892): 268).
3. See, for example, Atti C. D.I. (leg. XV, 1884) N. 215 + 215-A (Garelli); although apparently unknown to Aporti and generally little noted even in France, the claim to priority for infant schools may go to Pastor Oberlin who founded such an institution in Alsace-Lorraine in 1767 (Wines 1880, 339). On the French *Salles d'asile*, see Luc 1997.
4. On the Inquisition's 1837 condemnation of *asili*, see Catarsi and Genovesi 1985, 21–2. The observation regarding Pius IX comes from Gambero 1961. The Roman Società asili d'infanzia was founded in 1847 (*Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* [1876]: 200–1). The first Roman *asilo* seems to have been appropriately located in the working-class neighborhood of Trastevere (*L'Illustrazione Italiana* (1898, 1 sem): 292).
5. L. August 3, 1862, n. 753; L. November 13, 1859, n. 3725.
6. L. July 15, 1906, n. 383; L. June 4, 1911, n. 487; for Credaro's comments, see Atti C. disc. May 26, 1911, 14754; Atti C. disc. March 26, 1912, 18486; see also the Abbiate-Credaro exchange on this issue, Atti C. disc. March 26, 1912, 18483–6; see also Catarsi and Genovesi 1985, 125–6.
7. The French precedent in this case dates from 1844 (Wines 1880, 339–40).
8. R.d. December 31, 1923, n. 3106; Catarsi and Genovesi 1985, 142–54. The new budget was 5 million lire (equal to about US\$ 5.5 million as per value in 2002). By way of comparison, the National Organization for the Protection of Motherhood and Children, a Fascist creation of 1925, enjoyed a budget that grew by 1929 to over 100 million lire (Ipsen 1996, 147).
9. Wines 1880, 67–85, 125–31, 223–5, 338–41; on Brace, see, for example, Ashby 1997, 35–54; on Dr. Barnardo, see Murdoch 2000 and sources cited there.
10. Ferriani 1893; *madre snaturata* has a sort of phrasal meaning in Italian, perhaps in part thanks to Ferriani. Various alternative translations include cruel, inhuman, or unnatural (in the sense of contrary to a woman's presumed maternal or care-giving nature).
11. Conti 1896, 889.
12. Milazzo 1913, especially 1–47.
13. The major work on *abandon moral* in France is Schafer 1997; see especially 12, 67–86, 143–66. See also n. 9 above.
14. Ferriani 1893; Ferriani 1895; on the parallel singling out of abusive mothers in France, see Schafer 1997, 129–30.

15. On child saving in Florence, see Nuti 1992.
16. Raseri 1895, 47; ACS INT ABP 1910–12, b. 208 f. 26069.169.64; ACS INT ABP 1910–12, b. 208 f. 26069.169.68. The Institute was still looking for an adequate location in 1911 and it is not clear from the sources cited here whether it housed its charges or else placed them in other Roman institutions.
17. Presidential address; see copy in ACS PCM 1889 (Crispi) b. 96, f. 1.9(2).10.
18. Blasi, P. 1895; ACS INT ABP 1904–06 b. 43 f. 25069.65; 1910–12 b. 43 f. 25069.37.
19. Bozzotti 1909; ACS INT ABP 1910–12 b. 25 f. 25038.17.
20. See Buttafuoco 1988, 85–136 for comments on working-class sexuality/sexual experiences.
21. Grassi Koenen 1908; Blasi, M. 1912, 25; ACS INT ABP 1904–06 b. 42 f. 25069.26; 1910–12 b. 43 f. 25069.37.
22. Circ. March 16, 1911 in *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1911): 373–6.
23. I have discarded the responses of Naples and Parma as they refer to the existence of institutes but do not name them.
24. Bettazzi 1912; see also Portalupi 1908.
25. Gibson 1986, 77; see also Richard 1908.
26. Conti 1902; he continued to make the same demand over the next two decades (Conti 1912; 1923).
27. Atti C. disc. February 28, 1888, 1101; March 2, 1888, 1143; March 8, 1888, 1225–9; Atti C. D.l. (leg. XVI—1a sess. 1887–88) N. 136
28. On Coccapieller, see Rossi 1982.
29. For the Minelli proposal and related *interpellanze*, see Atti C. disc. June 10, 1891, 3248E–F; June 11, 1891, 3291–2; November 27, 1891, 4222; January 20, 1892, 5284; January 26, 1892, 330–5; February 6, 1892, 5828–9; Atti C. D.l. (leg. XVII, sessione 1890–92) N. 314.
30. Atti C. disc. December 22, 1892, 788–92; January 31, 1893, 1019–21; July 7, 1893, 6266; March 10, 1894, 7108–18; Atti C. D.l. (leg. XVIII, sess. 1892–3) N. 127, N. 127–A; Conti re-presented his proposal (unchanged) in the following legislature but to no avail (Atti C. disc. June 2, 1896, 5085–6; June 4, 1896, 5181–3). See also Conti 1896; 1902; 1912; 1923.
31. Atti C. disc. November 30, 1896, 7745.
32. Atti C. disc. December 2, 1897, 3714–18.
33. Atti S. disc. May 1, 1900, 1138; S. D.l. (leg. XX, sess. 1899–900) N. 80.
34. The circular, dated September 8, 1902, also included queries regarding *indigenti inabili al lavoro* and *beneficenza elemosiniera*; see *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1902), 609–37.
35. *Rivista di Beneficenza Pubblica* (1902): 611–12, *my italics*.
36. *Ibid.*, 623–30.
37. For responses to the circular, see ACS INT ABP 1907–9, b. 1. The statements gathered were published in DIRSTAT 1907, 237–41. For the Legge sulla istituzione di commissioni provinciali, di un consiglio superiore e di un servizio d'ispezione della pubblica assistenza e beneficenza, see Atti C. disc. May 30, 1903, 8377; May 31, 1904, 13145; June 19, 1904, 14129–40; June 20, 1904,

- 14189–208; June 21, 1904, 14303; Atti C. D.l. (leg. XXI) N. 379, 379-A; L. July 18, 1904, n. 390. For the 1904 and 1906 circulars, see *Bollettino del Ministero dell'Interno* (1906): 110–12. The institutions for which the 1/3 rule applied were “istituzioni pubbliche di beneficenza che destinano le loro rendite in elemosine senza determinazioni di scopo;” to avoid the rule, simply defining a scope for the institution should have sufficed.
38. He was surely aware that France had passed a similar law in 1904 (Schafer 1997, 137).
39. The *iter parlamentare* of the proposed law on “Assistenza agli esposti ed all’infanzia abbandonata” was the following:
Atti S. disc. May 4, 1907
Atti S. D.l. (leg. XXI) N.537 + N.537-A
Atti S. disc. November 9–12, 1907, 7657–81, 7690–713, 7718–30, 7754.
Atti C. disc. December 19, 1907
Atti C. D.l. (leg. XXI) N.921 and N.921-A.
40. See, for example, articles 18–34 of N. 921-A cited above.
41. Atti S. disc. November 9, 1907, 7665–6.
42. Atti S. D.l. (leg. XXI) N. 537, 5; the source cited for these figures was DIRSTAT, *Annuario statistico 1905–6*.
43. Atti S. disc. November 9, 1907, 7665–6.
44. For a critical reading of the 1907 bill by a representative of the Assembly of Provinces, see Calisse 1908.

Epilogue

1. On fairy tales, see Bettelheim 1975; Warner 1994.
2. For discussion of some of these issues, see, in addition to works cited in the introduction (n. 1), Derla 1997, Gaillard 1997, Morrissey and Wunderlich 1985, Toesca 1997.
3. Rather than referring to a particular edition, I will include chapter references in roman numerals.
4. The religious significance of a “virgin” birth to a father named Joseph has not gone un-noticed, but is not particularly relevant for our purposes.
5. As has been much commented upon, Collodi originally ended the serialized version of *Pinocchio* with the hanging (XV). In response to reader insistence, though, he brought the puppet back to life and added another 21 chapters, culminating not in death but in a happy ending. See Collodi/Perella 1986 or Collodi/Lawson Lucas 1996. On the tradition distinguishing between an unchanging puppet in chapters I–XV and a transforming puppet-becomes-boy in the rest of the work, see Pezzini 2002, 8–16.
6. For an Oedipal/Freudian reading, see Stone 1994; see also Collodi/Lawson Lucas 1996, xlv and 180, n. 58.
7. The only other time that Pinocchio’s nose grows is when he is trying unsuccessfully to get something to eat in Geppetto’s house (V).

8. The wood of our humanity comment is from Benedetto Croce; see Heisig 1974, 27.
9. See, for example, Collodi/Lawson Lucas 1996, xxxvi–xxxvii.
10. Or perhaps more correctly “children,” but the phrase does not have the same ring and both *Pinocchio* and, as we have seen, the society of Liberal Italy was more boy focused.
11. Corresponding more or less to fourth grade today; see De Amicis 2001, 3, n. 1.
12. The quotation is from Traversetti 1991, 6 (who rejects the characterization). For other discussions of the work, see Tamburini’s essay and annotations in De Amicis 2001 (as well as Umberto Eco’s essay “Elogio di Franti” in the same volume); Tamburini 1986; Cambi 1996; Faetti 1997.
13. See, for example, Hamerow 1983, 148–74; for Italy, Soldani and Turi 1993.
14. This list is cited by Tamburini in De Amicis 2001.
15. Dirstat 1907, 245–59; Vigo 1993.

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ACS INT ABP: Ministero dell'Interno—Assistenza e beneficenza pubblica

ACS INT DG carc. a.g.: Ministero dell'Interno—Direzione Generale delle carceri e dei riformatori—Archivio generale

ACS Min. INT DGPS Pol.Giud.: Ministero dell'Interno—Direzione Generale della pubblica sicurezza—Polizia giudiziaria

ACS INT Inch. NA: Ministero dell'Interno—Reale inchiesta di Napoli

ACS PCM: Archivio Centrale dello Stato—Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri

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Index

- abandonment 67, 154–7, 179–80, 189–95
 - material and moral 5, 8, 12, 117, 172–5, 182, 190
 - Bill on Moral and Material Abandonment (1907) 16, 42, 139, 152, 155–6, 168, 192–4
- see also* foundlings and foundling homes
- abortion 24, 29
- Abruzzo 35, 151
- Adua 7
- The Aeneid* 198
- Aethelstan 127, 128
- Agazzi sisters (Carolina and Rosa) 171
- agricultural colonies 131, 145, 175
- agriculture and farming 87–8, 99–100, 103, 106, 115, 133, 155
 - rice 100, 114–15, 119
- Alessandria 113
- Altavilla, Edoardo 78
- alunnato* 20–1, 27, 30–1, 35
- L'Ambrogiana Reformatory 135
- ambulant professions, *see* wandering trades
- Amendola, Gabriele 39–41
- Ancona 187
- Annunziata, Real Casa dell' 15–22, 24, 26–31, 32–3, 35, 39, 41, 43–4, 139, 190–1, 194
- Aporti, Ferrante 168–71
- apprenticeship 55
- Argentina 76, 205
- Arrivabene, Carlo 56
- Aschieri, Alberto 157
- asili* 45, 101–2, 133, 153, 167–72, 192–3, 195
 - law (1923) 172
 - for nursing infants 171
- Asilo Mariuccia 72, 181, 183
- Asor Rosa, Alberto 203
- Association catholique internationale pour le protection de la jeune fille 186–7
- Associazione Cislighi 182
- Associazione nazionale per la difesa della fanciullezza abbandonata 180–1
- Austria 36, 79, 88–9, 100, 132
- Avellino 32, 34, 36
- Babbage, Charles 56
- backwardness 7–8
- Bari 136
- Bartlett, Lucy 146–8, 153, 182
- Basilicata 54, 61, 151, 205
- Bass, M. T. 56
- Basso, Sante 79–80
- Bavaria 79
- beating-machine girls 90–1, 100, 105
- Beccaria, Cesare 127
- begging 2–3, 5, 13, 55–6, 58, 127, 129, 131–2, 134, 150, 155, 165, 173–5, 191–3, 201–2
- Belgium 70, 75
- Bellazzi, Federico 136
- Belluno 37, 40, 88
- Beltrani-Scalia, Martino 138–9, 141, 143–6, 151, 158, 194
- Benelli, Giulio 141, 152, 156–7

- Bergamo 88, 97
 Berti, Domenico 106
 Bettazzi, Rodolfo 187
 Biella 88
 Biffi, Serafino 150
 Bissolati, Leonida 113
 Blasi, Pio 165, 180, 190
 Bologna 25, 100, 135, 180
 Borstal Prison 143
 Bosco, don (Saint Giovanni Bosco)
 175, 179, 183
 Bosco Marengo 123–5, 137, 159
 bottle making 61–2
see also factories/manufacturing
 industry (glass)
 Bovio, Giovanni 20
 Brace, Charles Loring 173, 179
 Brazil 76
 Brianza 97
 Brusa, Emilio 193
 Brussels 75, 80
 Bruzzo, Giuseppe 98
 Budapest 72
 Buenos Aires 73
 building trades 79–80, 85, 99–100,
 104, 198, 200
 Butler, Josephine 70
 Buttafuoco, Anna 183
- Cabiati, Attilio 119
 Cabrini, Angiolo 69, 118–19
 Cafiero, Ugo 64–5, 72
 Cairo 73
 Calabrese, Raffaele 153
 Calabria 40, 103, 151, 171
 Caltanissetta 92, 95, 98, 108
 Campania 35, 103–4
 Campobasso 78
 Canada 77
 Canevaro, Napoleone 67
 Cantono, Alessandro 111
 Capelli, Gian Battista 70
 Carcano, Paolo 114
carusi 91–4, 96–9, 105, 107, 112, 115,
 119–20
- Casa benefica per i giovani derelitti
 175
 Casa di custodia Reformatory 132–3
 Casa maschile Reformatory 135
 Casanova, Alfonso di 178
 Caserta 36, 60–1, 64, 78, 104
 Catalani, Tommaso 59
 Catania 53, 71, 104, 165
 Catarsi, Enzo 168, 171–2
 Cavagnari, Camillo 147
 Cavasola, Gianetto 16, 18, 20, 22, 32
 Cellamare, Principe di 22
 Celli, Angelo 115–16
 cellular confinement 125, 137, 161
 census (1881) 102–4, 118
 Charitable Works Congress (1898) 188
 Charitable Works Law (1862) 170
 Chicago 143
 child abuse *passim*
 Children's Aid Society 173, 175
 Children's Friend Society 173
 childsaving 5–6, 10, 16, 72, 167–9,
 172–95
 chimney sweeping 58, 174–5, 204
 Christian Democrats 110–11, 119
 civil code 133
 1865 134
 Clement XI 129
 Coccapieller, Francesco 165, 167, 189
 Collodi, Carlo 1, 3–4, 197–8, 201–2
 Comitato di difesa dei minorenni
 tradotti in giustizia 147
 Comitato nazionale per la difesa
 giuridica dell'infanzia e della
 fanciulezza abbandonata 181
 Commissariato Generale
 dell'Emigrazione (CGE) 53, 65,
 73, 76–8
 Commission for Judicial Statistics
 151
 Commissione protettrice dell'infanzia
 abbandonata e maltrattata 189
 Committee on Juvenile Delinquency
 (1909) 5, 139, 141, 145–6,
 152–7, 194

- Como 36, 88, 97, 108, 170
 Congresso nazionale della donna
 italiana (1912) 188
 Congresso nazionale "Pro Infanzia"
 (1902) 181
 conservatories (girl) 47–8, 128, 182
 Conti, Ugo 166, 168, 174, 188, 190
 Corbin, Alain 70, 74–5
 Cosenza 32
 Costa, Andrea 106
 crèches, *see asili*
 Credaro, Vittorio Emanuele 170
 Cremona 101, 108, 132, 168, 170
 Crete 75
 crime (child) 3, 5, 10, 12, 16, 55, 117,
 125–7, 129, 131–2, 134–5, 137–43,
 145–6, 148, 150–8, 172–3, 179,
 181–2, 193–5, 200–1, 204
 Crispi, Francesco 19, 112–13, 165,
 167, 179–80
 Croatia 79
 Cunningham, Hugh 5, 11
 Cuore 197, 202–6

 Dalmazzo, Fanny 163
 Daneo-Credaro Law (1911) 170
 dangerous and unhealthy occupations
 58, 67–8, 77, 85, 88, 98, 104, 107,
 112, 119–20, 149, 194
 day care, *see asili*
 De Amicis, Edmondo 197, 202–4
 De Crescenzo, Nicola 30–1
De rerum novarum 110
 Delacroix, Eugène 133
 demographic mentalities 8–10
 denatality 87
 Depretis, Agostino 19
 di Rudinì, Antonio 19–20, 64, 112
 Di San Giuliano, Antonino 112, 114,
 117–19
 Di Sandonato, Gennaro 19
discernimento 130–1, 134–5, 137, 140–1
Don Quixote 198
 Doria, Alessandro 139, 144–6, 148,
 151, 153, 158–9

 dormitories 183–4, 187
 Dr. Barnardo's Homes 173, 175, 179
 drunkenness 155

 Egypt 71, 75
 Einaudi, Luigi 119
 emigration 3, 5–6, 12, 16, 43, 52–83,
 117, 142, 145, 154–7, 167, 172,
 194, 198–200, 204–5
 agents 66, 75, 78
 clandestine 76–81
 Emigration Law
 1888 65, 67, 205
 1901 5, 11, 52–3, 63, 65–8, 70,
 76–7, 79, 117, 156, 191, 195
 Emilia 151, 187
 Engel, Adolfo 113
 England, *see* United Kingdom
 L'Ergastolo Reformatory 135
 eugenics 3
 exploitation 121

 factories/manufacturing industry 85,
 87–8, 89, 94, 99, 103, 106 108,
 116, 133, 156–7, 171
 clothing 103–4
 food 104
 glass 4, 53, 60–5, 66–9, 70, 72,
 78–80, 85, 100, 104, 117, 119,
 166, 194
 match 96, 100, 104, 119
 metal 104
 paper 104, 119
 pasta 97
 pin and hook 100
 pottery 100
 printing 104
 shoe 104
see also textiles
 Falcioni, Alfredo 81
 farming, *see* agriculture and farming
 Fascism 43–4, 195
 feminism 74, 157
 Ferrara 187
 Ferri, Enrico 153

- Ferriani, Lino 173, 179, 182
 fertility 12
 filiation subsidies 22, 29, 37–8, 40–1, 42–4
 fishing 99
 Florence 78, 97, 104, 129, 174, 179
 Forlì 137, 145, 150
 fosterage 145, 154
 Foucault, Michel 126
 foundlings and foundling homes 3, 4, 7–8, 11–13, 15–46, 98–9, 128, 149, 154–7, 172–3, 189–94, 204
 Foundling Home Investigation 22, 24, 32–41, 45, 191
 Foundling Law 43–4
 France 6, 9–11, 23–4, 26, 28, 33, 38, 52–3, 56, 59–66, 68, 72–6, 78–80, 85–7, 92, 103, 106, 117, 127, 129–31, 143, 168, 173, 175, 179, 189–90, 194
 Law for the Protection of Mistreated and Morally Abandoned Children 175, 189
 Napoleonic codes 128, 130
 penal code (1791) 127, 130
 Franchetti, Leopoldo 96
 Franco-Italian Accord for the Protection of Young Workers 68–70
 Frosinone 60
 Fuchs, Rachel 23

 Galton, Francis 3
 Garibaldi, Giuseppe 30, 189
 Garibaldi, Riciotti 189
 Gavazzi, Lodovico 116–17
 General Directory of Prisons and Reformatories 139
 La Generala Reformatory 123, 132–3, 135, 137–8, 145, 204
 Genova 73–4, 76, 204
 Genovesi, Giovanni 168, 171–2
 Germany 10, 73, 168, 172–3, 179
 Gibson, Mary 187
 Giolitti, Giovanni 6, 8, 42–3, 53, 80, 125, 152, 172, 190–3, 195

 Giordano, Alfonso 96–7
 Girgenti 92, 95
 girls 3, 140–1, 158, 160–1, 182–8
 institutionalized 26–30, 47, 131, 138, 148, 151
 see also labor (women and girls), *oblatismo*, prostitution, white slave trade, and *passim*
 glass, *see* factories/manufacturing industry
 golden age of children's literature 6
 Grassi, Ernesto 39, 43
 Grassi Koenen, Maria 184
 Great Britain, *see* United Kingdom
 Grossberg, Michael 6
 Gubbio 36
 Guerri, Cornelio 190
 Guerzoni, Giuseppe 57, 60
 Guidi, Laura 21, 28, 40

 Heywood, Colin 87, 103
 homosexuality 123, 125, 143, 160–2
 Hunecke, Volker 23, 26
 Hunt, Peter 6

 idleness 2–3, 5, 123, 125, 134, 137, 173, 193
 Ignatieff, Michael 126
 illegitimacy 11, 23–6, 31, 37–9
 Illinois 143
 immorality and moral
 concerns/attitudes 39–41, 117, 138, 148, 183
 incarceration 126–7, 132–6, 139, 141, 146, 179
 India 109
 Indianapolis 146–7
 industrial schools 131, 143, 173
 industrialization 10, 82, 129, 142, 157, 169, 203
 infanticide 7, 23–4, 29
 International Congresses for the Protection of Childhood 174–5, 180
 Isernia 61, 64
 Istituto Bonafous 175

- Istituto Casanova 178
 Istituto del buon pastore per le povere
 figlie traviate 186
 Istituto Savoia per l'infanzia
 abbandonata 180
 Italian Welfare Society (Paris) 56–7
 Italian Women's Conference (1908)
 78, 80

 jails, *see* prisons and jails
 juvenile courts/magistrates/tribunal
 143, 145, 153–7
 juvenile delinquency, *see* crime (child),
 idleness, paternal affection, street
 children, vagabondage

 Kertzer, David 25, 40
 Kuliscioff, Anna 111, 113–14

 Labor
 child 3–5, 7–8, 10, 13, 16, 53–70,
 85–122, 154, 167, 170, 172, 200
 inspectors 86, 96, 98, 105, 107–8,
 119
 office (MAIC) 119–20
 women and girls 80, 85, 90–3, 94,
 97–8, 100–2, 105–6, 110,
 112–18, 169–70
 Labor Laws, Child
 France 62, 68, 86
 Italy 12, 57, 67, 93–8, 104–9,
 111–21, 139, 155, 192
 1886 85–7, 106–9, 111–13,
 115–16, 158, 189
 1902 68, 85–7, 118–20
 1907 85, 120
 Landsberg 80
 Langer, William 23
 Lazzaro, Giuseppe 18–20
 Lecco 89, 97
 Leo XIII 110, 112
 Lercara 96–7
 Libya 7
 Liguria 97
 literacy 205–6
 Loire 61

 Lombardy 36, 88–90, 101, 103, 115,
 132, 151, 168
 Lombroso, Cesare 3
 London 53–4, 56, 60, 72, 80, 117, 175
 Loria, Achille 109
 Louis Napoleon 131
 Louisiana 92
 luxury of caring 7, 11, 13, 195
 Luzzatti, Luigi 67–9, 72, 79–80,
 95–80, 104–7, 109, 120, 184, 187
 Lyon 76

 Maffi, Antonio 109
 Maggiorani, Carlo 94–6, 109
 MAIC labor studies 97–102, 104–5
 Majetti, Raffaele 64–5, 146, 160, 166,
 181, 184
 Majno, Ersilia 72, 153, 181, 183, 188
 majority 125, 134, 154
 Malta 71, 73, 75
 Manini Reformatory 132
 Marches 99, 102
 Mariani, Amilcare 123–5, 137, 158
 Mario, Alberto 30
 Marseilles 51, 53, 55
 Martinazzoli, Antonio 147, 153
 Martini, Luigi 175, 179, 181
 masturbation 162
 maternity hospital 25, 30
 maternity and paternity searches 25,
 36–41, 42–4
 medical certificates and exams 85,
 107, 109, 112, 161
 Membretti, Annibale 166, 168
 Mendel, Gregor 4
 Messina 32, 52–3, 71, 76, 181
 Le Mettray 130–2, 137, 143
 midwives 29
 Milan 6, 13, 26, 33, 37–9, 43, 47,
 72–4, 78, 88, 95, 104, 113, 116,
 166–8, 171, 179, 181–3, 186–8
 Milazzo, L. 174
 Minelli, Tullio 32, 189–91
 mines and mining 13, 85, 87, 94–9,
 107–8, 112, 116, 119
 law 94–5

- mines and mining—*continued*
 lead 99
 slate 97
 sulfur 91–3, 95, 108, 116, 166
 zinc 99
 Minghetti, Marco 104–5
 Minors Code (1912) 5, 125, 153–7, 172
 Modena 187
 Modica 32
 Montelupo 135
 Montessori, Maria 144–5, 153, 171
 moral corruption, *see* sexual abuse
 mortality,
 infant 9, 190
 foundling 15–18, 22, 24, 30, 32–5, 38
 murder 128, 140
 Murri, Romolo 111

 Naples 12, 15–22, 27–31, 33–4, 36, 37–9, 40, 44–5, 51, 55, 71, 76, 97, 104, 129, 132, 135–6, 149, 158, 161, 167, 178, 183
 risanamento 44
 Nardinelli, Clark 87
 Neuchâtel 70
 New York 54, 56, 59, 117
 Nicotera, Giovanni 19, 32, 96–7, 111–12, 189

oblatismo 27, 47
The Odyssey 198
 Oeuvre internationale pour le placement familial 52
 Omboni, Stefania 188
 Oneglia 36
 Opera Bonomelli 64–5, 72, 78
 Orlando, Vittorio 139, 146, 151, 156
 orphans and orphanages 45–9, 52, 128, 135, 155, 181, 191, 199

 Padua 32, 34–5
 Palermo 32, 52–3, 76, 92, 94–5, 97
 Pantano, Edoardo 66–8
 Papal States 94

 parental affection 23–4
 Paretta, Maria 51–2, 54, 72, 75, 77
 Paris 53, 56, 60, 63, 73, 80, 175
 Parkhurst Military Hospital 130, 132
 Parlati, Francesco 18–19
 Parma 145
 passports 76–7, 79
 Passport Law 76
 paternal correction 7, 13, 125, 129, 131, 134–5, 137–41, 143–5, 147–51, 158, 160 179, 201
patria potestà 26, 57–8, 154–5, 173, 179, 192–3
patronati 146–8, 152, 182, 192
patronati scolastici 154, 170
 Patronato Reformatory 132
 Paulucci di Calboli, Raniero 60, 63, 66, 68, 73–5, 78, 194
 pellagra 122
 Pelloux, Luigi 34, 41, 67, 191
 penal code
 1839 (Sardinia) 132–4
 1853 (Tuscany) 132
 1859 (Sardinia) 133–4
 1899 65, 133–4
 penal procedural code (1913) 146
 Pennsylvania 59
 Perrod, Enrico 65
 Perugia 135, 151, 158
 Petit, Jacques-Guy 127
 La Petite-Roquette 130
 Pettiti di Roreto, Carlo Ilarione 88–90
 Philadelphia system 130
 Philanthropic Society 130
 physicians 109–10, 118–19
 Piacenza 32
 Piazzola del Brenta 79
picconieri 92–4, 98–9
 Piedmont 61, 64, 101, 103, 115–16, 123, 132, 151, 168, 187, 205
Pinocchio 1–4, 12, 197–203, 206
 Pio istituto per i figli della provvidenza 179–81
 Pius IX 168
 Pola, Giuseppe Cesare 147–8, 153, 166, 182

- Poland 109
 poor houses 127
 population growth 129
 positivism 142, 173, 182
 prison and reformatory norms
 1861 136
 1877 136–7
 1891 125, 136–7, 143, 146, 158
 prisons and jails 126–9, 135–7,
 140–1, 143, 145, 150, 156, 158–60,
 181–2
 probation, *see* suspended sentences
 prostitution 3, 5, 13, 31, 39, 42, 47,
 51–2, 65, 67–8, 70–5, 77, 80–1,
 117, 128, 150, 160, 181–3,
 188–9, 193
 Protasi, Maria Rosa 61
 Protettorato di San Giuseppe 48–9
 Provisions for the Southern Provinces,
 Sicily, and Sardegna (1906) 170
 Prussia 86
 Public Security Laws 133
 1865 57, 66
 1889 2, 134, 137, 141, 150
 Pucci, Gustavo 20–2, 29, 31
 puericentrism 12–13
 Puglia 19, 35, 99, 103
 punishment 126–8, 137, 145, 160
 capital 126, 132
 corporal 123, 126–7, 143–4
 ergastolo 134
 torture 127

 Quarta, Oronzo 145, 153–4, 157

 racial degeneration 9, 109, 115–16,
 118, 142
 Ranieri, Antonio 26–9, 31
 rape, *see* sexual abuse
 Raseri, Enrico 34
 Re Bartlett, Lucy, *see* Bartlett, Lucy
 Red Cross 53
 Red Week 7, 141
 reformatories 7, 13, 123–6, 128–41,
 143–5, 149–54, 158–62, 181–2,
 193, 201
 case di correzione 137, 141, 145,
 150, 158–9
 case di custodia 135–7
 excursions 143–5, 159
 norms (1907) 145, 159–60
 personnel norms (1904) 144
 private reformatories 135, 138,
 145, 151, 156
 risformatori di rigore 124, 137, 160
 Reggio Calabria 52, 71, 181
 Regina Coeli 158
 religious corporations 47
 religious instruction 160
 Rhône 61
 Risso, Pietro 124–5
 Rive-de-Gier 78
 Roccasecca 64
 Roman Republic 189
 Rome 32, 47–9, 53, 72–3, 80, 104,
 131–2, 135, 144, 147, 158, 165–8,
 179–84, 187–90
 Ronconi, Guglielmina 188
 Rossi, Alesandro 95–6, 106, 109–10
 Rossi, Teofilo 68
 Rovigo 32–4, 37–8, 40, 189
 Rubinacci, Ferdinando 19–20
 Russia 94, 105, 109, 113

 Sacchi, Giuseppe 88–9
 Salerno 99
 Salesian Order 175
 Salvemini, Gaetano 171
 San Filippo Neri (Hospice) 129
 San Lazzaro Parmense Reformatory
 145
 San Martino, Carlo 179–83, 190
 San Michele (Hospice) 129, 144–5
 Santa Balbina Reformatory 132–3,
 135
 Santa Maria della Pace Reformatory
 132
 Santol, Joseph 52–4
 Saracco, Giuseppe 67
 Sardinia 35, 76, 99, 136
 Saredo Investigation 44
 Savoie 58

- Savona 36
 Scarfoglio, Eduardo 18
 Scelsi, Lionello 64
 Schafer, Sylvia 6
 Schiaparelli, Lionello 64–5, 68, 73
 Schio 88, 95
 school 3, 48, 85, 98, 102, 115, 120,
 133, 152, 154–6, 159, 168, 170,
 183, 187, 195, 198, 203–6
 Casati reforms (1859) 170
 Elementary School Law (1877) 171
 seamstresses 104, 118
 Seine 61
 Sella, Francesco 124
 Serao, Matilde 18, 31
 Service des enfants moralement
 abandonnés 175
 sexual abuse 123, 125, 128, 136,
 140–1, 160–1, 173, 182–4, 188
 Shorter, Edward 23, 26
 Sicily 35–7, 40, 52–4, 91–6, 98,
 103–4, 109, 115–16, 119, 136, 188
 Siena 48
 Sighele, Scipio 153
 Simeoni, Luigi 19–20, 34
 Slovenia 79
 smoking 153
 Socci, Ettore 66, 74–5, 165
 Socialists 110–11, 113–14, 118
 Società dei fanciulli abbandonati e
 maltrattati 180
 Società italiana protettrice dei fanciulli
 179
 Società nazionale di patronato e
 mutuo soccorso per le giovani
 operaie 187
 Società nazionale di protezione
 dell'infanzia (Pro Infanzia) 180,
 190
 Society for Poor and Abandoned
 Children 175
 Sondrio 32
 Sonnino, Sidney 96
 Sora 61–2, 64, 72, 78
 Spain 91, 109
 statistics
 asili 171
 childsaving 193
 criminal/judicial 135–6, 139–42,
 148–51, 157–9
 foundling and foundling mortality
 23, 26, 32, 34–5, 45
 labor 89, 93, 103–4, 169
 orphan 45, 48
 school/literacy 205
 War Ministry 95
 Stead, W. T. 70, 74–5
 Stockholm 175
 Stoppato, Alessandro 143, 153
 street children 3, 10, 12, 16, 117, 129,
 133–4, 142, 150, 156, 160, 165–7,
 169, 171, 174–5, 194, 201
 Street Music Metropolis Bill (1864) 56
 suspended sentences 143, 145–6, 151,
 154, 182
 Sweden 179
 Switzerland 73, 76, 168
 syphilis 17, 38, 64, 75
 Syracuse 40, 48
 Talamo, Salvatore 110–11
 Texas 92
 textiles and textile production 61, 80,
 86, 90, 100–1, 103, 106, 109, 116,
 119–20, 170
 cotton 88, 99, 103
 linen 103
 silk 88–91, 96–7, 100, 103, 107–8,
 112, 115–16
 wool 88, 99
 theft 2, 5, 128, 140, 148, 157
 Tivoli 124, 135
 Toniolo, Giuseppe 110–11, 119–20
 Trapani 102
 Treviso 120
 Tripoli 75
 tuberculosis 64
 Tunisia 75
 Turati, Filippo 111, 113–14,
 118–19

- Turin 70, 74–5, 88, 104, 123, 132,
 135, 137, 141, 145, 147, 152, 175,
 178–9, 181, 187–8, 202, 204
 Turin, Berta 80
 turning cradle 24–6, 28–9, 31, 33,
 35–7, 40, 42, 44, 46, 155
 Tuscany 99, 104, 127, 132, 151,
 168, 198
 Udine 36, 79, 100
 Union Internationale des Amies de la
 Jeune Fille 70, 73, 78, 80, 184, 187
 United Kingdom 10, 46, 52, 56,
 59–60, 70–1, 86–7, 91–2, 94, 96,
 106, 127, 129–31, 143, 153–4, 168,
 172–3, 179, 195
 Children Act (1908) 143, 154
 Children's Protection Act (1899) 60
 English Charity Organisation
 Society 59
 English National Vigilance
 Association 72
 Factory Acts 86
 Penitentiary Act (1799) 127
 United States 10, 46, 76–7, 131, 142,
 145–6, 166, 168, 173, 179, 195
 unruly children, *see* paternal correction
 urbanization 10, 82, 142, 169, 203
 Urbino 137, 141, 145, 150
 Uruguay 76
 vagabondage 2–3, 5, 57–8, 60, 123,
 125, 129, 132, 134, 137–41, 143,
 148–51, 173, 189, 193, 201, 204
 Velletri 48
 Venetia 35–6, 88, 90, 96
 Verona 100–1
 veterans 189
 Vevey 73
 Viggiano 54, 61
 Villari, Pasquale 30
 Visconti-Venosta, Emilio 67–8, 72
 Walkowitz, Judith 74
 wandering trades 1–2, 13, 54–61,
 65–8, 70, 76, 81, 85, 117, 149, 155,
 167, 194, 200
 Law (1873) 54, 57–60, 67, 81, 155,
 204
 Welfare Law
 1890 46
 1904 192, 194
 wet nurses and wet nursing 16–18,
 20–2, 24–31, 35–6, 40–1,
 48, 190
 White Mario, Jessie 24, 30, 33–4,
 38–9, 41, 183
 white slave trade 5, 51–2, 60,
 68, 70–5, 80–1, 172, 183–4,
 188, 191
 International Accords (1904, 1910)
 74, 80–1
 International Union for the
 Suppression of the White Slave
 Trade 72
 Italian Committees for the
 Suppression of the White Slave
 Trade 5, 72, 80, 117, 183
 Paris Conferences (1902, 1910)
 72–4, 80, 184, 188
 Women's Secretariat for the Protection
 of Emigrating Women and
 Children 78
 work booklets 69, 77, 79, 107–9, 116
 work houses 128–9
 World War I 7
 World's Fair 56
 Young, Robert 130
 Youth Offenders Act (1854) 131
zampognari 54
 Zanardelli, Giuseppe 42
 Zanella, Giacomo 56
 Zelizer, Viviana 10